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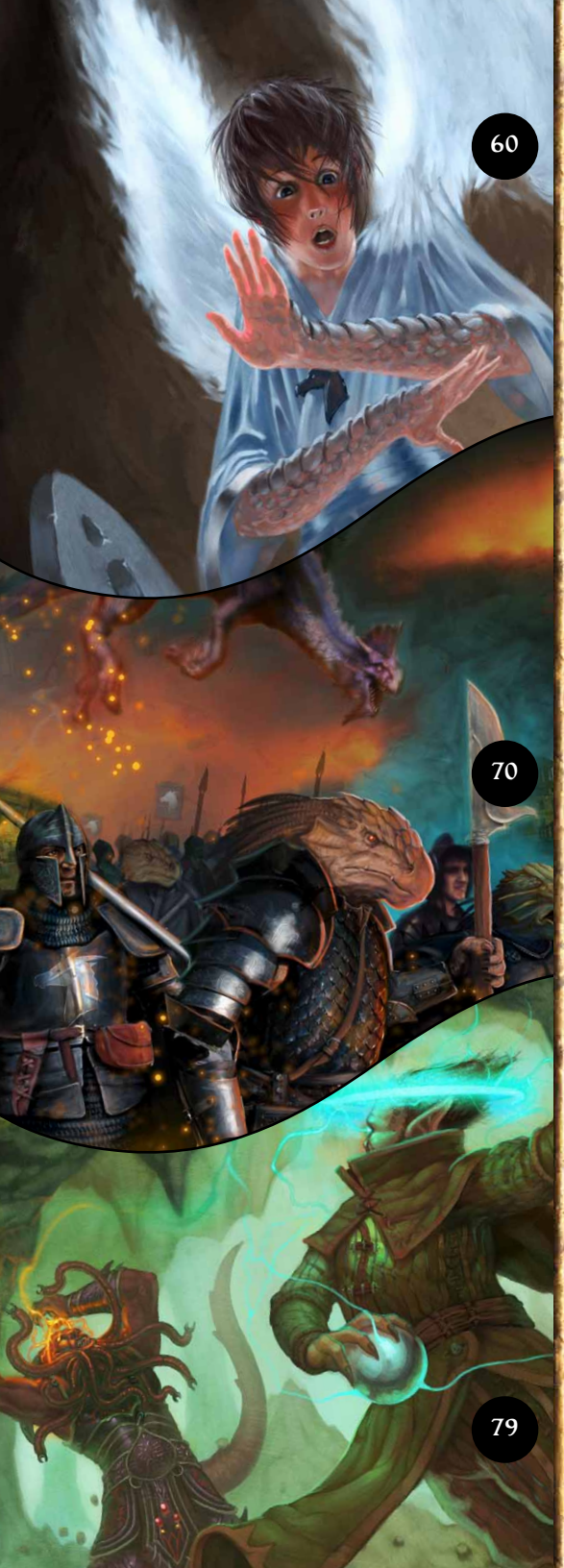

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Just the Facts, Ma'am

I experienced what might be my favorite D&D moment of all time a few weeks ago. Chris Perkins' Wednesday night game is a world of small islands and large oceans, and our low-paragon group has just acquired our first ship. We routinely have sessions in which we don't roll a single die, and one such session a few weeks back involved us attempting to hire a crew. Chris informed us, through an NPC ally, that the secret to a happy crew was a good ship's cook. When all was said and done, we managed to successfully hire the best cook in the city through a series of roleplaying encounters, wrangling him away from the service of another captain. As negotiations wrapped up, I happily leaned back in my chair and announced my satisfaction at finally hiring my own personal chef -- even if he was only around to make me midnight snacks in game. What a night!

So what's the point here? Well, if you're reading this, odds are good that you're a 4th Edition D&D player. If you are, odds are also good that you know folks who play other editions. And if you know folks who play other editions, odds are especially good that you've heard the complaint I'm about to address.

Before we go any further, let me say one thing: I don't mind if you're playing 1st, 2nd, or 3rd Edition. If you're having a great time and your campaign is fun, keep doing what you're doing. We love it that you're playing D&D -- any D&D! Personally, I wouldn't trade my 3rd Edition campaign memories for anything. If you're playing another edition because you're having fun, I'd say you're doing so for the right reason. Gaming should be about fun first and foremost, after all! That said, as a true believer in the current edition, I certainly hope all D&D players give 4th Edition a try at some point.

Anyway, if you're like me, you've likely heard some unfounded criticisms about 4E and been frustrated by them. A lot of misconceptions still float around in cyberspace, often spread by people who haven't even played the game. But I want to address one of the strangest here:

All roleplaying has been removed from D&D with 4th Edition.

If you're here on *D&D Insider,* I'll bet you've heard this before. The first time you heard it, you might have responded the same way I did: with confusion.

The next time you hear this myth bantered around, feel free to direct people here. Better yet, invite these folks to your next 4th Edition session and show them firsthand the roleplaying opportunities available in the game.

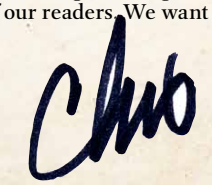
Fourth edition doesn't include some of the mundane mechanical elements of character building that 3rd Edition did. For example, certain skills (I'm looking at you Craft and Profession) enabled a player to feel like his character had some sort of grounding in the "real world" of the campaign. Odds were good that you never made a Craft or Profession check in your game, but having ranks in that skill made you feel connected to your character's background. In 4th Edition, those skills are gone. Why? Because we feel like a character's statistics don't represent the absolute truth of a character's story. That's right -- the reason those skills (and other such elements from other editions) are gone is that we felt they *hindered* roleplaying.

Now if you want to say your character was a blacksmith's apprentice and knows how to make his own sword, just say so. Don't worry about feeling forced to reflect that story decision mechanically. Just write it on your character sheet. Liberating, isn't it?

Then you've got skill challenges. While they do include mechanical elements, they provide a structure that DMs can use to navigate complex non-combat situations. Most importantly, this is the first time the game has given DMs an easy way to reward characters for their participation. In other words, 4th Edition includes *incentives* to incorporate roleplaying (and other non-combat) situations into your game.

Beyond character background or skill challenges, this complaint makes the least sense to me because in every RPG I've played over the past twenty years and more, roleplaying was ultimately a result of the narrative brought to the table by the DM and players, not something provided by rules. That's the beauty of roleplaying, after all! D&D has always been a game of heroic fantasy, and there's nothing about those two words that requires rules of any sort.

I honestly hope that most 4th Edition players don't encounter this level of antagonism often. I also hope none of us stoop to taking potshots at the games other people play. This hobby is supposed to be fun, so even if you're tempted to rise to the bait of a hater, remember what Thumper said- ear it at dndinsider@wizards.com. If we get some good ones, we'll share them with the rest of our readers. We want to hear from you!



Githzerai

Design by Robert J. Schwalb

Commentary by Mike Mearls, Stephen Schubert, Robert J. Schwalb, Chris Sims, and James Wyatt

illustrations by Michael Komarck

This month's *Player's Handbook* 3 debut content is the githzerai, one of four races to be featured in that book.

In addition to the full race entry, this article presents a brand-new githzerai paragon path—the vengeance warrior known as the *rrathmal*—as well as several racial feats for your githzerai character.

All of this content comes directly from the pages of next year's *Player's Handbook* 3, and you get to see it seven months before everyone else: just another of the great benefits of being a D&D Insider!

Thanks for all your feedback on our first PH3 debut article, last month's psion. We've tweaked the format a bit to make this month's article more reader-friendly, while retaining the R&D commentary that makes this content more than just pages from a book.

Tune in next month for another exciting dose of *Player's Handbook* 3!

Click here to visit the Compendium entry for the githzerai.

COMMENTARY

James Wyatt: The inclusion of the githzerai was a no-brainer for the *Player's Handbook* that introduces the psionic power source to the game. They're one of the most iconic psionic races. Not coincidentally, they're also iconic monks.

Robert J. Schwalb: Of all the psionic-themed races appearing in 3rd Edition, the 'zerai are the strongest in terms of flavor and party compatibility. As a human-like race, they are not so alien that the average player can't have fun giving them a spin.

What's more, the githzerai have an interesting history (descent from an enslaved race), they have classic enemies (githyanki and mind flayers), and they work especially well with the background developed for the psionic power source.

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GITHZERAI

Ascetic and disciplined, masters of body and mind

RACIAL TRAITS

Average Height: 6′ 0″-6′ 5″
Average Weight: 160-190 lb.

Ability Scores: +2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom
Size: Medium
Speed: 6 squares
Vision: Normal

Languages: Common, Deep Speech
Skill Bonuses: +2 Acrobatics, +2 Athletics
Danger Sense: You have a +2 racial bonus to initiative checks.
Defended Mind: You have a +2 racial bonus to saving throws against effects that daze, dominate, or stun.
Shifting Fortunes: When you use your second wind, you can shift 3 squares as a free action.
Iron Mind: You have the ***iron mind*** power.

Iron Mind — **Githzerai Racial Power**

Under the brunt of an attack, you use the power of your mind to fortify yourself against harm.

Encounter
Immediate Interrupt **Personal**
Trigger: You are hit by an attack
Effect: You gain a +2 bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn.

The githzerai are descended from an ancient race once held in thrall by mind flayer overlords. After the bloody uprising that won these people their freedom, ideological differences split them into two races: the githzerai and the githyanki. The githzerai rejected the cruel warmongering of the githyanki and withdrew to the Elemental Chaos and remote locations in the world to follow a path of self-reflection, harnessing the power of the mind and soul. Centuries later, the githzerai remain in such locations, leading disciplined lives and observing their surroundings to determine their place in the universe.

COMMENTARY

Stephen Schubert: The monk is the iconic githzerai class, and the race's high Dexterity and Wisdom make it perfectly suited for that class. I expect many players to experiment with other psionic classes, because the githzerai will feel like the most "psionic" race available. A high Wisdom score fills the secondary ability score for the other three psionic classes, though the githzerai will need to get his primary ability score for those classes the hard way.

Chris Sims: I also like that the race readily supports the pursuing avenger, which is a lot like a religious battle monk in my mind. I'd like to start playing a githzerai avenger of Ioun myself.

Stephen Schubert: This version of the githzerai expands on the *Monster Manual* entry by adding a couple of new racial traits. We felt that the *MM* version was a little light when compared to the other available races. We wanted traits that emphasized both mobility and mental fortitude to capture the monk-friendly and psionic-friendly themes that are iconic for the githzerai.

Play a githzerai if you want . . .

- ✦ to be a character with strong planar ties.
- ✦ to avoid attacks and stay one step ahead of your enemies.
- ✦ to be a member of a race that favors the avenger, monk, and ranger classes.

Physical Qualities

Characterized by spare frames and an exotic appearance, githzerai are taller than humans and slender to the point of being gaunt. Their skin tends toward yellow tones, occasionally shading into brown or green. They have distinctive angular features and pointed ears, as well as eyes set in deep sockets and flattened noses set high on their faces.

Male githzerai usually keep their heads shaved or tonsured and braided, and they grow controlled facial hair. A typical style is a shaved pate with a long braid from the back of the head. Females wear their long hair close to the head in braids or tight buns. Githzerai hair is typically russet, but black and gray sometimes appear.

The githzerai commitment to asceticism means that they generally disdain displays of wealth. Their clothing is practical, simple in design, and accentuated only by simple jewelry. They indulge their artistic nature through body painting or tattoos. Even these expressions incorporate a functional purpose: Tattoos serve as identifiers, helping githzerai recog-

nize the tradition and location from which a fellow githzerai hails.

Githzerai live about as long as humans.

Playing a Githzerai

Githzerai value their heritage. It informs their philosophy, their behavior, and their intolerance for githyanki and mind flayers. Where githyanki crave battle and conquest, the githzerai seek inner harmony and self-mastery. They often travel great distances to explore the self and to give up mortal attachments by witnessing the possibilities that existence has to offer.

Although githzerai are willing to explore and experience creation, they maintain a worldview centered on personal responsibility and accomplishment. Githzerai social hierarchy is based entirely on merit, and each githzerai must earn a place in history. Great heroes, leaders, and teachers are immortalized as revered ancestors, with important techniques and cultural elements bearing their names. The unworthy remain lowly and are forgotten in name and deed.

Austerity, prudence, pragmatism, and tenacity also run strong in the githzerai persona. Githzerai rarely own more than is needed. They don't speak at length when a brief statement will do. Although githzerai have fiery souls, reflected by their fierce resolve and strong loyalties, they rarely display strong emotions. The trust of a githzerai must be earned, and most githzerai expect weakness and lack of discipline in others. However, githzerai readily make use of any resources at hand, including members of other races, to solve problems or shore up defenses. Githzerai rarely back down from a challenge in which success seems possible.

COMMENTARY

James Wyatt: Contrary to some message-board claims, the githyanki are not appearing in *Player's Handbook* 3. Why not, you ask?

The githzerai's evil kin are great villains, and we want to be careful about how often we turn villain races into player character options. Making the drow a playable race spent a lot of that currency, and we don't want to overdo it.

Mike Mearls: While sometimes it's fun to play against stereotypes, we don't want every villainous race to go the way of the drow.

Robert J. Schwalb: As much as I love the mechanics, the githzerai story really grabs me. Githzerai recall their roots, they know who they are, how they came to be where they are, and what is at stake if they abandon the disciplined lives they built for themselves. The githyanki loom as a warning about what happens when githzerai give into their warlike inclinations, when they let emotional extremes guide their actions. Their natural discipline, balance, and even emotions provide players with strong roleplaying tools, while also giving built-in adversaries for player characters to loathe and fight.

Chris Sims: Within the framework of asceticism and introspection are a lot of possibilities for playing to and against type. The introspective character on a path of purposeful self-development is extremely compelling to me, especially when the character isn't so bound to a single creed that adaptability is lost. The core of Zerthimon's philosophy seems to be introspection, adaptability, action, and moderation, which can be as cool in a D&D game as it is in real life.

Few connections hold any sway over githzerai. Religion, nationalism, and even familial loyalties are less important than personal seeking and enlightenment. Githzerai place value on proven methods and associates, rather than on those that tradition or dogma might dictate. Githzerai seek out capable teachers, students, and companions, and they are unwavering allies to those who prove worthy.

To discover whether someone or something is worthy, githzerai must be open-minded as well as willing to learn and to take risks. The fact that githzerai find it easier to trust other githzerai than members of other races tempers this measure of tolerance. Only a member of the race can truly understand the struggles that githzerai have undergone.

Githzerai Characteristics: Ascetic, calculating, calm, cautious, cynical, disciplined, introspective, pragmatic, quiet, secretive, suspicious, terse

Male Names: Dak, Durth, Ferzth, Greth, Hurm, Kalla, Murg, Nurm, Shrakk

Female Names: Adaka, Adeya, Ella, Ezhelya, Immilzin, Izera, Uweya

Githzerai Backgrounds

A githzerai character has access to these background elements.

Cenobite Initiate: You were raised and trained in a githzerai monastery in the Elemental Chaos or a remote part of the world. You might have lived there your whole life, contemplating the dangers around you and binding your mind in rigid discipline. Something drew you away from your home. Perhaps you sought the answers to questions about your race's

origin. Maybe a visitor to your monastery aroused your curiosity about the world beyond its walls. Now you find yourself outside the disciplined civilization of the githzerai. How are you adjusting? Is the experience intriguing or frustrating? Are new companions a suitable replacement for those you left behind?

Associated Skills: Arcana, History

War Band Survivor: You joined a githzerai war band that either traveled to the world or originated in it. Your band sought enemies of the githzerai and found foes beyond your group's capabilities. Only you survived the battle. What happened to the rest of your band? You might be stranded in the world with no easy route home, but do you want to go home? Is the shame of your band's defeat, or perhaps the shame of your survival, too great? Do you seek vengeance for the death of your companions or absolution for the guilt you feel as a survivor?

Associated Skills: Dungeoneering, Perception

Rrathmal

"The search for enlightenment and the freedom we now possess do not allow us the luxury of quietly suffering our enemies."

Prerequisite: Githzerai

Untold years of slavery shaped your people. Freedom molded them further during the split from those who became the githyanki. In the centuries since the githzerai gained independence, they have struggled to master themselves and prepared themselves against any threat to the liberty they earned so long ago. They shall not be enslaved again.

Defense is not enough, however. Your people have always formed war bands to deal with menaces close and far. Highest among these is a rrakkma, a vengeance band. In these elite cadres, a mighty few—called rrathmals—gather together and venture forth to hunt those who still watch the free githzerai with covetous eyes. Each rrakkma sets out on a hunt, bringing destruction to mind flayers, githyanki, and other threats wherever they are found.

At times, a rrakkma has a specific goal, such as hindering githyanki plans of conquest or ferreting out a hive of mind flayers. Other rrakkmas wander until they have faced a number of foes sufficient to call the mission a success. To serve in a rrakkma is a great privilege, and githzerai preparing to join such a group receive special training. Even a githzerai who has proven worthy while traveling among nongithzerai might be so honored.

You are such a one. You have served your people well, proven yourself worthy of special training, or found a teacher who knows the techniques of the vengeance warriors of the githzerai. Rrathmals have a variety of abilities. They share only a few secrets that allow them to make assaults decisively, pursue enemies relentlessly, and defeat foes utterly.

As is always true among the githzerai, what you do with your power is up to you. The expectation is only that you use your rrathmal training to the best of your ability to protect yourself, your people, and your companions. With it, you'll continue to prove yourself among the greatest of your people. You'll write yourself into the chronicles of the githzerai and into the nightmares of those who invite your vengeful hand.

COMMENTARY

James Wyatt: There's very little change in the story of the githzerai in their 4th Edition incarnation. They've always been a race of monastic ascetics who sought order and peace in the midst of churning chaos. The change in the game's cosmology, which removed the old plane of Limbo, meant that the githzerai had to find a new home, but the Elemental Chaos is pretty much everything that Limbo used to be (and more), so that was a pretty natural choice.

Mike Mearls: The githzerai have placed themselves in the midst of a region that runs counter to everything they do, in order to test themselves and to confront a challenge directly. That flavor is pretty nifty, so it was simply a matter of finding the best match for that.

Robert J. Schwalb: I like the symmetry established in 4th Edition: Githyanki fled to the Astral Sea and are now a destructive presence in the otherwise mostly stable plane, while the githzerai withdrew to the Elemental Chaos, where they are a stabilizing presence in a mostly tempestuous plane.

Robert J. Schwalb: The rrathmal draws its inspiration from 3rd Edition's githzerai treatment, in particular Bruce Cordell's "Calm Amid the Storm" in *Dragon Magazine* #281 and Chris Young's "Killing Cousins" in *Dragon Magazine* #306 (as Chris Thomasson).

I wanted a paragon path that spoke to the ongoing struggles against the githyanki and mind flayers, while also giving players a vehicle for acquire powers similar to those presented in various githzerai entries in the *Monster Manual*.

Rrathmal Features

Psychic Resistance (11th level): You gain resist 10 psychic. The resistance increases to 15 at 21st level.

Unfettered Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, any effects that slow or immobilize you end.

Preternatural Instinct (16th level): When you roll initiative, you can roll twice and use either result.

Rrathmal Powers

Trace Chance — Rrathmal Attack 11

By peering into the future, you pick through the possibilities to anticipate your enemy's next action.

Encounter
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Target: One creature
Effect: You gain a +2 bonus to the attack roll of the next at-will melee attack you make against the target before the end of your next turn. If that attack hits, it is automatically a critical hit.

Inescapable Fate — Rrathmal Utility 12

Even as your opponent withdraws, you are in motion, cutting off its retreat.

At-Will
Immediate Reaction **Personal**
Trigger: An adjacent enemy shifts away from you
Effect: You shift your speed to a square adjacent to the triggering enemy.

Commentary

Stephen Schubert: The rrathmal mixes roles a bit, and thus appeals to a variety of characters, though melee-based characters stand to benefit the most. Both defenders and strikers appreciate the added mobility of Unfettered Action and inescapable fate, while vengeance shroud provides a leader-like boost to damage output consistency. The daily attack power pushes the path a bit closer to classes that value Dexterity or Wisdom, and given the expected predilections of githzerai players, I expect plenty of monks to try out the rrathmal path.

Stephen Schubert: At first glance, trace chance would seem to have the same issue we had with righteous rage of Tempus, in that it nearly guarantees a critical hit. But a closer look reveals the balance built into the power.

First, the power is a standard action: it essentially lets you trade your attack output during one round for a much bigger hit in a later round.

Second, the power only boosts an at-will attack, which reins in the damage a bit, preventing the character from getting an automatic critical with a high-output daily attack power.

We expect that this power will be used in a round when a PC can't reach his target but might be able to on the following round, or in conjunction with an action point to get it all out in one round.

Vengeance Shroud — Rrathmal Attack 20

Exerting your steely will, you force order onto the chaos of battle and turn the hostility of your adversaries into suffering.

Encounter ✦ Psychic, Zone
Standard Action **Close** burst 2
Targets: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Dexterity or Wisdom + 6 vs. Will
Hit: 2d10 + Dexterity or Wisdom modifier psychic damage. The first time the target hits or misses on its turns, it takes 10 psychic damage (save ends).
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: The burst creates a zone of order that lasts until the end of your next turn. The first time any ally within the zone makes an attack roll on his or her turns, he or she can choose to take 10 on the attack roll rather than roll a d20.
Sustain Minor: The zone persists.

Heroic Tier Feats

Alhahn's Mindful Relocation

Prerequisite: Githzerai

Benefit: When you use your Shifting Fortunes racial trait, you can shift a number of squares equal to your speed, instead of 3 squares.

Dakshai's Body-Mind Union

Prerequisite: Githzerai

Benefit: When you are subjected to an effect that a save can end, you can expend the use of your *iron mind* racial power as an immediate interrupt to make a saving throw with a +5 bonus against that effect, instead of gaining *iron mind*'s normal effect.

Iron Resolve of Zerthadlun

Prerequisite: Githzerai

Benefit: While you have at least 1 power point, you gain a +2 feat bonus to saving throws.

Miryath's First Strike

Prerequisite: Wis 13, githzerai

Benefit: The first time you hit a creature that has not yet acted during the encounter, the creature takes extra psychic damage equal to 1 + your Wisdom or Dexterity modifier. The extra damage increases to 2 + your Wisdom or Dexterity modifier at 11th level and 3 + your Wisdom or Dexterity modifier at 21st level.

Zuwoth's Enlightened Step

Prerequisite: Githzerai

Benefit: During the first round of an encounter, you do not provoke opportunity attacks from enemies that have not yet acted.

Paragon Tier Feats

Githzerai Planewalker

Prerequisite: 11th level, githzerai

Benefit: When you perform the ritual Linked Portal, Planar Portal, or True Portal, you halve the time required to perform it and gain a +5 bonus to any required skill check. In addition, you can master those rituals even if you don't have the Ritual Caster feat.

Iron Hands

Prerequisite: 11th level, Wis 13, githzerai

Benefit: While your *iron mind* racial power is in effect, you gain a bonus equal to your Wisdom modifier to melee damage rolls.

COMMENTARY

Robert J. Schwalb: Githzerai feats reinforce and expand the race's existing themes and mechanics.

Stephen Schubert: The githzerai racial power and saving throw bonus already invokes the idea of an inner defensive focus, so the feats allow us to expand on that, and even extend that inner focus to his offensive output via Iron Hands.

Robert J. Schwalb: They also incent players to build iconic race and class combinations.

Stephen Schubert: For example, the mobility-based feats appeal to the monk, who wants to get in and out of combat quickly.

We also wanted feats that tie the githzerai thematically and mechanically to the psionic power source. This desire resulted the psychic damage from the Miryath's First Strike feat, and the power point tie-in of Iron Resolve of Zerthadlun.

Chris Sims: I also wanted to evoke cultural themes; concepts that support what the prose says about the githzerai. Connecting feats to specific historical githzerai—via the names used—strengthens the concept of racial heritage and reverence for ancestry.

Shared Danger Sense

Prerequisite: 11th level, githzerai

Benefit: Allies within 5 squares of you gain a +2 racial bonus to initiative checks.

Wind's Fortunes

Prerequisite: 11th level, githzerai

Benefit: When you use your Shifting Fortunes racial trait, you can instead teleport the number of squares you would have shifted.

Epic Tier Feats

Adamantine Mind

Prerequisite: 21st level, githzerai

Benefit: When you use your *iron mind* racial power, you gain a +4 bonus to all defenses, instead of +2.

Iron Body

Prerequisite: 21st level, Wis 13, githzerai

Benefit: While your *iron mind* racial power is in effect, you gain resistance to all damage equal to your Wisdom modifier.

Peerless Reaction

Prerequisite: 21st level, githzerai

Benefit: When you are hit by an attack, you can expend the use of your *iron mind* racial power as an immediate interrupt to use your second wind, instead of gaining *iron mind*'s normal effect.

Domain of Dread:

Monadhan, the Traitor's Hold

By Daniel Marthaler
Illustrations by Chad King
Cartography by Sean Macdonald

Monadhan is a domain of wretched anguish forever lost within the endless reaches of the Shadowfell. Escaping the clutches of a domain of dread is no easy task, because the Shadowfell does not give up its secrets lightly. Only those who come to understand something of the dark lord and why the domain came to be can hope to breathe free air once more.

Long ago, when the dragonborn empire of Arkhosia warred with that of devil-tainted Bael Turath for dominion of the world, the dragonborn of Arkhosia forged pacts with dragons to aid their war effort. One such was Arantor, a silver dragon who felt that aiding the empire against the devilry of Bael Turath was a glorious and fitting endeavor for one of his power. During his service, Arantor was tasked with the destruction of a remote Turathi military outpost almost hidden within thick tropical rain forest. Its remote location and jungle surroundings ruled out ground-based reinforcements. Accompanied by his daughter and protégé Imrissa, he took wing and prepared for a swift and brutal surprise assault to eliminate the threat.

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They attacked by night, diving out of a torrential downpour and raking the camp with their freezing breath while smashing tents and crude buildings asunder with tail, wing, and claw. In that first furious assault, they slaughtered scores with surprisingly little resistance. Only after the first pass did they discover, to their horror, that the tents below harbored not the battle-hardened legions of Bael Turath but civilian refugees: families, elderly, infirm, and wounded. Imrissa and Arantor broke off the attack immediately and retreated to the security of the storm clouds. Weighed down by the innocent blood they had spilled, Imrissa proposed that they return to Arkhosia immediately to report the terrible mistake. Arantor, concerned with the damage such a massacre would cause to his reputation, declared that they would inform no one of the night's events. Their argument over a course of action grew long and heated as lightning crashed around them until irrevocable words were uttered and Imrissa, disgusted with her sire, turned to head back and report the truth whatever the consequences. In a blind fit of rage, Arantor attacked. The battle was swift and vicious. Imrissa was no match for her elder; soon her broken body plummeted through the raging storm and was lost to the jungle below.

With rage, grief, and self-loathing coursing through him like molten steel, Arantor turned to the valley below. No one could bear witness to his shame; no one could be left to tell the tale of this . . . mistake. Methodically, mercilessly, he hunted down and butchered every last refugee, leaving nearly two thousand silent corpses in his wake.

He fled the valley, but could not return to Arkhosia. Instead he vanished into the wild places of the world, surfacing from time to time as the war progressed to launch ruthless attacks on Turathi targets, military and civilian alike. Each time the slaughter was complete; Arantor left no survivors. The carnage continued until a team of Turathi dragonslayers tracked him to ground and destroyed him.

Arantor awoke, whole and seemingly healthy, in the Shadowfell as the dark lord of his own personal domain of dread: a twisted reflection of the jungle valley, complete with fortress and refugee camp, where his shame was born. As the years slipped by and he exhausted every avenue of escape he could conceive, Arantor became aware that he still aged as he would have in the mortal realm. He consigned himself to waiting out his considerable life span, hoping that his purgatory would end and he would be allowed peace upon his death. This was not to be. As his body died, his consciousness remained trapped within his decaying form, animating it as an undead prison to last throughout eternity. As his flesh began to rot away, he became aware that where his heart should have been rested the skeleton of another silver dragon: the daughter he turned upon and murdered. When the last scrap of withered skin sloughed off, it stirred and began to ceaselessly whisper the names of the innocents Arantor had slain over the years.

MONADHAN

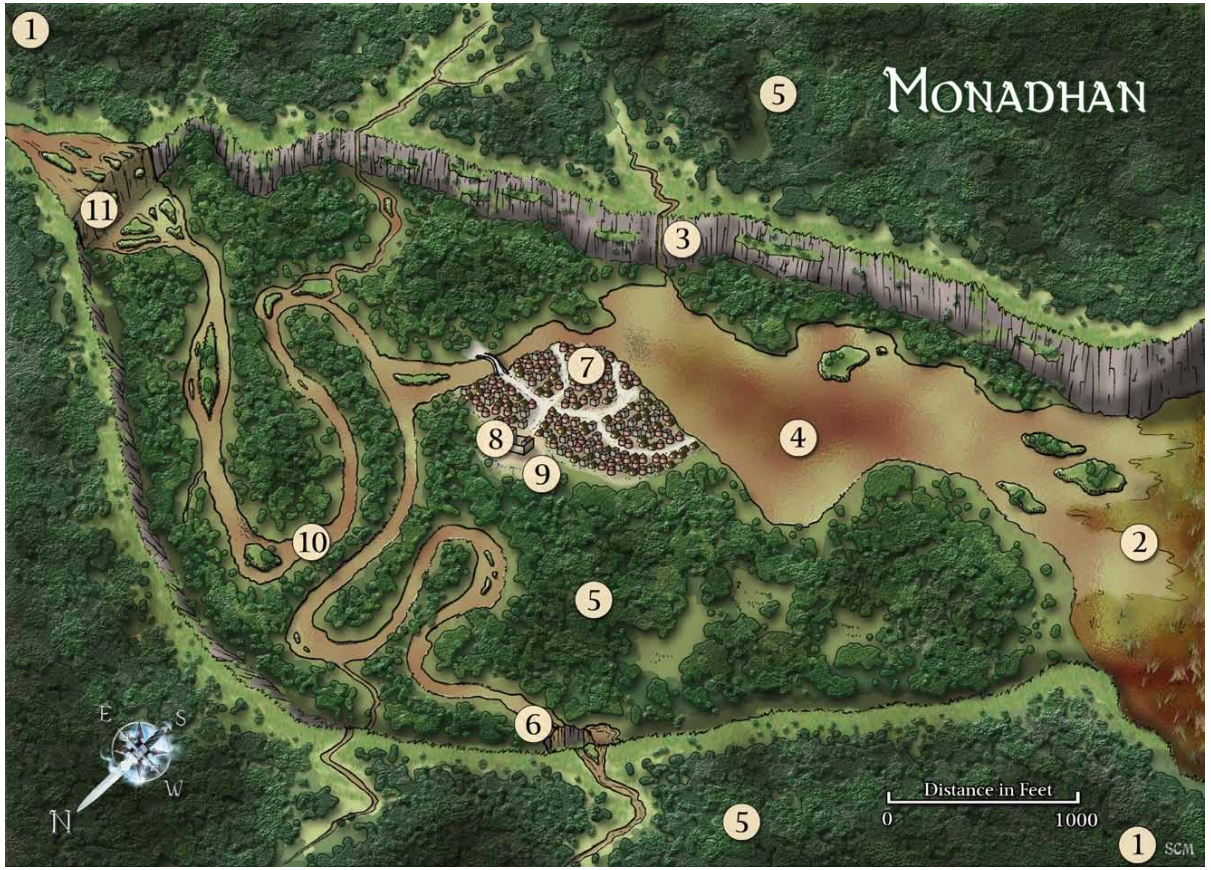
Long ago, the remote jungle outpost attacked by Arantor and Imrissa was known as Monadhan. Its ruin, toppled by time and choked by the forest, lies nameless and forgotten deep in a trackless rain forest of the mortal realm. In the Shadowfell, however, it still stands within the domain that shares its name. Most of the residents are ignorant of their home's proper title and refer to it in all manner of creative and expletive-ridden nicknames.

Like the dark lord, those that inhabit the domain of Monadhan have all committed a manner of base treachery. Only traitors find themselves here: commanders who send those who trusted them to their deaths out of pride, magistrates who condemned innocents to line their pockets, those who turned upon their friends or families to save themselves, and the like. The greater the treachery and the more pathetic the reason, the more likely the perpetrator is to find a place within Monadhan. Needless to say, trust is hard to come by; those who survive long learn to sleep with one eye open and a dagger in hand.

The domain's most famous, or infamous as the case might be, inhabitant is the vampire Kas. Cast here after his betrayal and attempt on the life of the god Vecna, he can pass through the mists around the domain unharmed. However, he remains drawn to the traitor's domain like a moth to a flame, going so far as to keep a small base of operations and cadre of minions within Monadhan.

1. The Mists

Thick fog enshrouds the domain, forming an impenetrable wall and canopy that renders the sun a hazy, hateful blot but does nothing to blunt its heat. No one voluntarily comes near the mists, because they have been known to swallow without a trace those foolish enough to approach. What becomes of them cannot be said, but since the Shadowfell is a harsh mistress and those entering the mists are never seen again, no one doubts that it is horrific. From time to time the mist disgorges terrifying beasts or terrified people from across existence, and none of the sentient travelers have knowledge of how they came to Monadhan.



2. Tangledeep

The swamp that lies on the southern extreme of Monadhan, which extends farther into the mists than anyone has dared travel, is a dark, unimaginably dense place of warped trees. Stagnant, scum-covered water plummets from 3 inches in depth to seemingly bottomless without warning among the dark groves. All manner of dangerous and hostile creatures lurk in the murky depths, ranging from parasitic fish and blood-seeking flies to primordial hydras and chuul juggernauts. Fearsome beasts occasionally emerge from the trackless depths of the swamp to rampage through the shantytown, hunt the surrounding forests, or snatch careless fisherfolk from the water's edge. The proximity of the mists, not to mention the vicious inhabitants, prompts the people of Monadhan to avoid the Tangledeep at all costs; even those wishing to end their lives steer clear, for there are easier and less painful ways to die.

3. Warden Cliffs

Steep cliffs surround Monadhan, jutting from the valley floor and obstructing travel in every direction not already blocked by the Tangledeep. Their flanks are swathed in the same thick jungle that covers the rest of the domain, with only the sheerest faces revealing the damp gray and brown stone from which they are constructed. They can be climbed, but the inhabitants of the realm know to avoid doing so lest the fickle mists send a monstrosity to harry them or creep unexpectedly close to the edge and cut off escape. Only the desperate or foolhardy search above the cliffs for food or strange treasures left behind by the mist.

4. Blackfish Lake

The deep, still waters of Blackfish Lake are home to the dark-scaled fish that give the lake its name. The lake veritably teems with aquatic life, ranging from freshwater shrimp to terrifying predators more than capable of swallowing a human without a trace. Even the humble blackfish can pull human-sized meals beneath the surface, and they grow from an innocuous foot or so when young to a creature of staggering proportions that is easily larger than an ogre. Small, crude boats float offshore in search of larger specimens while land-based fishers cast lines to snare the smaller blackfish that live near the shore. The boats never stray far onto the lake, and never at night, for fear of the hydras, chuuls, and other monsters that occasionally make their way in from the south, where the lake bleeds into the Tangledeep.

5. Jungle

Most of the domain of Monadhan is covered with wild, tropical rain forest. Dense canopies turn the already gloomy days into twilight and the nights into pitch darkness. All manner of animals prowl this jungle, calling out mocking cries and stalking intruders just at the edge of vision. The native fauna

is without exception larger, more cunning, and more dangerous than their counterparts in the mortal realm. Tigers the size of horses stalk the forest floor with unnerving grace, their stride noiseless despite their muscled bulk. Great snakes slither and coil amid the trees and waterways, armed with crushing grips and venomous fangs. Monstrous insects and arachnids, some the size of a grown human's head and some the size of the human, chitter and scuttle through the canopy and along the floor. The flora is no less deadly, with aggressive, predatory species and lethally toxic plants in abundance.

Despite its unsettling atmosphere and dangerous occupants, the forest is the primary source of raw materials for the humanoid inhabitants of the domain. Most scrabble for wood, edible plants, and smaller animals at the edges of the jungle, heading deeper only when the direst of need drives them or they no longer care for their own safety. Larger parties do occasionally strike out into the forest to go after more valuable resources or to hunt exotic beasts for their valuable hides or the sport of the chase. Even so, the inhabitants of Monadhan keep one eye on the shadowed forest at all times, fearing what might come crashing out to sate its hunger just as much as they fear an anonymous knife in the back.

6. The Pit

The massive, yawning hole the natives of Monadhan refer to as "the pit" descends into the darkness, seemingly without bottom. Most refuse to go near it, because those who move too close, especially if they enter the pit, have a nasty habit of not returning. Wild rumors circulate about what might be contained within its depths, but only those who have hurled themselves off the edge, whether in despair or in a vain hope that doing so might offer an escape from their hellish predicament, know for sure.

7. Shantytown

Nearly all the three thousand odd inhabitants of Monadhan live in the incredibly dense packing of ragged tents, crude lean-tos, and shoddy huts cobbled together from rubbish. Known variously as Shantytown, Campton, the Town, and all number of curse-ridden monikers, the area has crushing overcrowding that only worsens nearer to the center of the shantytown as the inhabitants build adjacent to, on, and over preexisting sites as they huddle away from the dangers of the jungle. Tiny, twisting paths run hard against the hastily constructed buildings that hem them in, making fatal ambushes amid the piles of filth and refuse a common hazard and fact of life. New arrivals must quickly acclimate themselves to the oppressive and crushing press of bodies, as well as the staggering stench of offal, refuse, sweat, and death that accompanies it. Most inhabitants gain a constant sense of paranoia and never let their guards down.

The layout of the camp is in constant flux as neighbors kill each other, people occupy or abandon shelters, and gangs war for territory. Only the sturdiest of the huts and the central path that leads to the outpost can be considered landmarks. The names of buildings and even entire sections shift as throats are slit and triumphant gangs christen their territory, but "downtown" is accepted to be the interior of the camp, where predation by creatures from the rest of the domain is less of a risk but predation by fellow humanoids more so. The less populated areas, which provide a modicum of safety from cutthroats but expose inhabitants to the beasts of the wild, are known as "edgetown."

8. Monadhan Outpost

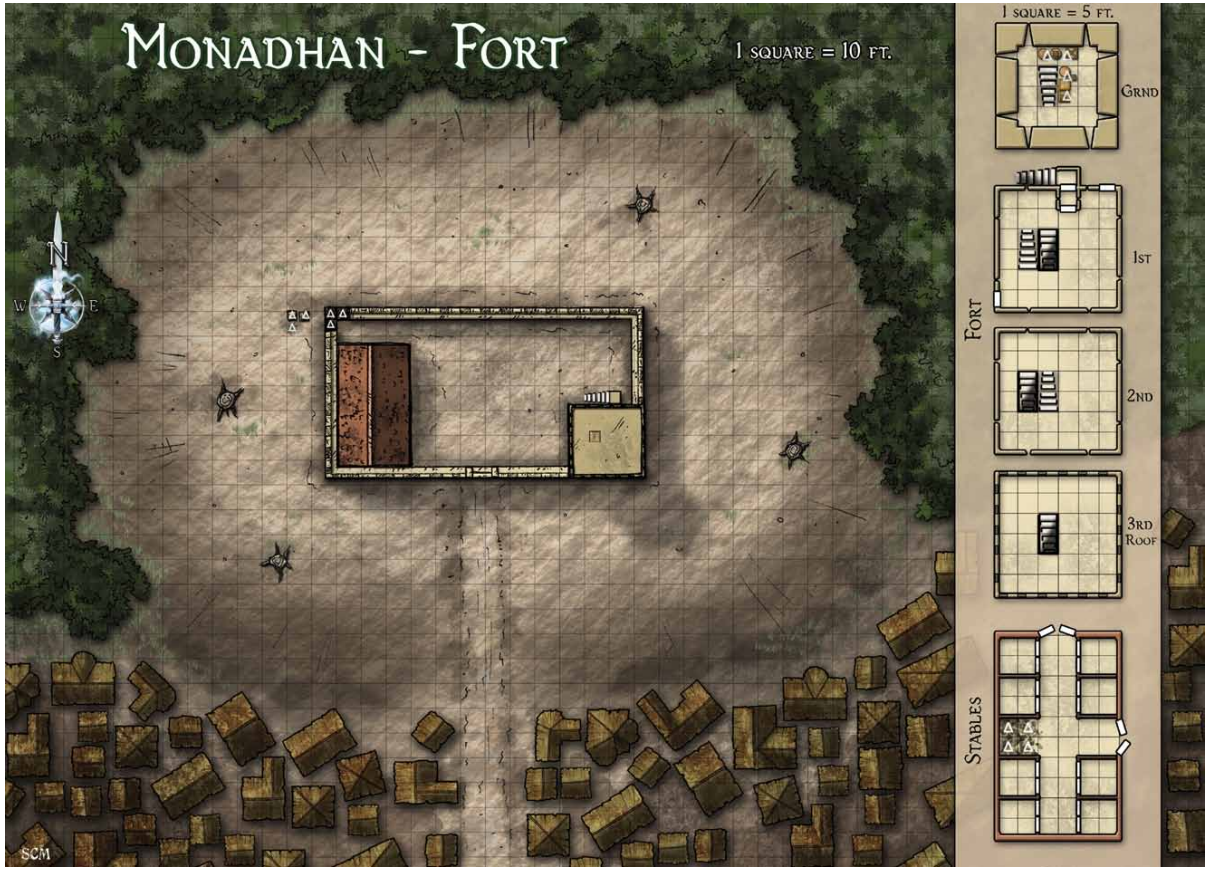
The only defensible and structurally sound building around, the outpost is the target of some of the fiercest gang fighting. The gang that gains control of the outpost is the ruling body of the shantytown for as long as they can maintain control. Since the domain is populated solely by traitors, this rule is next to impossible to enforce and dissolves before long when the gang inevitably tears itself apart with backstabbing and infighting.

The outpost is currently under the control of Pelnur Gatesfist, a ruthless, self-aggrandizing military governor who was eventually lynched by his abused subjects before he ended up here. He and his gang of thugs struggled to secure the fort shortly after the arrived, which cost them dearly, and Gatesfist is struggling to maintain appearances and recover his strength before an upwardly mobile underling or rival gang discovers just how weak he is. Any new arrivals would undoubtedly be "encouraged" by some sides to join their ranks in the brewing turf war and be targeted for elimination by others that feel the status quo is threatened.

9. Cavern Entrance

The area beneath the outpost and shantytown is riddled with caverns. The dark lord of the domain, Arantor, has claimed the largest as his personal quarters. The caverns that lead up to it are home to the troop of death giants and their leader, Bahlik Gur, who serve as Arantor's personal guard and, perhaps, jailors. The main entrance to the system lies in the jungle, and lethal giants and slave fodder captured from the town protect it.

Many of the shantytown's residents are aware that black-skinned giants inhabit the jungle, but most



assume they are just another danger of the wilds. However, a few of the more observant have noted that the giants are encountered, judging by the locations where people vanish or are found slaughtered, with greater frequency in certain areas—almost as if they are guarding these areas from interlopers. Of course, since those who speak of such topics have a tendency to die messily, they are careful with whom they discuss this.

10. Ternun River

Slow and deep, the Ternun meanders through the jungle before splitting north of the outpost and shantytown. The shorter east branch flows past town before emptying into Blackfish Lake. The western branch eventually winds its way to the pit, where it plummets into the deep. A wide variety of fish call the Ternun home, but since massive crocodiles and other aquatic predators do as well, fishing is fraught with danger and wading is reserved for the suicidal.

Getting to Monadhan

If you're looking for a few ways to take your PCs to Monadhan, below are a few ideas that will hopefully inspire you.

Turathi Legends: The PCs receive word that a long-forgotten treasure or military secret of the empire of Bael Turath is located in an obscure and remote jungle outpost once known as Monadhan. As the PCs approach, after whatever trouble they have locating and traveling to the lost outpost you deem appropriate, a thick fog rolls in. When they walk clear of it, they see before them not the tumbled-down ruin, but the intact fortress and teeming shantytown of the domain of dread.

Undead Menace: Rumor has it that a powerful band of undead is using a ruined fortress deep within the hostile jungle as a staging area. As the PCs near the area, they encounter a strange, heavy fog. Eventually they stumble out of the mists that surround Monadhan.

Jungle Crossover: While navigating a dense tropical swamp or jungle, the PCs find it becomes increasing misty as they continue. After some time, they emerge from mists just north of the Tangledeep.

Betrayal: The night after the PCs betray someone who trusted them, a thick fog rises to blanket the area. Within the fog it begins to grow warmer and warmer while odd noises, such as the hum of large insects, the dripping of water that wasn't there, or the cawing of tropical birds, begin to be heard with increasing regularity until the fog lifts and the PCs find themselves in Monadhan.

11. Ternun Falls

These spectacular, cascading falls are a beauty lost upon the inhabitants of Monadhan. Wreathed in ever-present rainbows, the water tumbles breathtakingly through the air as it descends It then breaks into a multitude of streams that sparkle brightly as they plummet down the sheer rock face and, with a sound akin to rolling thunder, plunge into a deep lake at the base of the falls before continuing the journey along the Ternun River. The locals avoid the area since they are the types who do not appreciate such marvels, and the massive amount of spray the falls throw out makes it difficult to see if the mists might suddenly have crept into the valley proper.

12. Halls of the Betrayer

The vampire Kas the Betrayer maintains a small base of operations in a series of converted caves east of Blackfish Lake. The vampires and other undead are led by Gwenth and Rolain and are under orders to maintain a low profile, only preying on those who stray too far from the shantytown. The inhabitants of the town are aware that something lurks in the eastern forest, but the wild rumors rarely even resemble the truth.

Life in Monadhan

Monadhan is populated primarily by traitorous souls condemned there by whatever unknowable mechanism governs the Shadowfell, deposited from disparate times and locations, seemingly without rhyme or reason. A scattering of those born within the domain and a handful of unfortunates vomited forth from the mists round out the population. Regardless of their origin, those who hope to survive long quickly learn to watch their backs. Life is cheap in Monadhan, and trust too often comes with the highest price of all.

As might be expected in a society composed of known traitors, there is little cooperation and no law beyond that of the jungle. The strong prey on the weak, accumulating opportunistic lackeys as news of their exploits grows. These gangs form what passes for government in the domain, demanding tribute from the inhabitants of whatever territory they claim in return for the dubious protection they offer from rival gangs and from their own violent tendencies. The gangs are in constant flux as turf wars rage, gang members switch allegiances, and leaders are murdered by treacherous underlings. Brisk espionage and assassination trades, employing both gangers and neutral parties, keep things moving and ensure that even well-entrenched individuals sleep with one eye open.

When not scheming to advance themselves or fighting off the plots of others, which are the twin

Arantor **Level 25 Solo Brute**
Huge natural magical beast (dragon, undead) XP 35,000

Initiative +19; see also *two souls* **Senses** Perception +19; darkvision
HP 819; **Bloodied** 409; see also *bloodied breath and shattered prison*
AC 38; **Fortitude** 39, **Reflex** 36, **Will** 36
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 25 cold, 15 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 15 radiant
Saving Throws +5
Speed 8, fly 8 (hover)
Action Points 2

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Necrotic**
Reach 2; +30 vs. AC; 2d8 + 6 damage plus 2d8 necrotic damage.

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +30 vs. AC; 2d8 + 8 damage.

Furious Onslaught (standard; must be Arantor's turn; at-will)
Arantor makes a claw attack against each enemy in reach, and one bite attack.

Remnant Breath (standard; must be Arantor's turn; encounter) ✦ **Cold, Necrotic**
Close blast 5; +28 vs. Reflex; 3d10 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target takes 15 ongoing cold damage (save ends).

Bloodied Breath (when Arantor first becomes bloodied; encounter) ✦ **Cold, Necrotic**
Arantor recharges *remnant breath* and uses it immediately.

Betraying Breath (standard action; must be Imrissa's turn; recharge ⚅ ⚅) ✦ **Charm, Psychic**
Close blast 5; targets enemies; +28 vs. Will; 2d10 + 4 psychic damage and the target is dazed until it damages one of its allies.

Influential Whispers (standard; must be Imrissa's turn; at-will) ✦ **Charm, Psychic**
Ranged 10; +28 vs. Will; 2d10 + 4 psychic damage, and the target is dominated (save ends). *Aftereffect:* The nearest ally within 3 squares of the target is dominated (save ends). This attack does not provoke opportunity attacks.

Dead Dragon's Stride (move; must be Imrissa's turn; at-will) ✦ **Teleportation**
Arantor teleports 10 squares.

Two Souls
Arantor acts twice each round, once on initiative result 30 and once on initiative result 20. The first is Arantor's turn, and the second is Imrissa's turn, which determines which powers Arantor can use on each turn. On Imrissa's turn, Arantor can only move by using *dead dragon's stride*.

Shattered Prison (when Arantor drops to 0 or fewer hit points)
Arantor's corpse cracks open and releases Imrissa, who continues to fight. She is large instead of huge, has 234 hit points, does not benefit from *two souls*, can move normally, and only uses powers that can be used on Imrissa's turn.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Athletics +27, Insight +19
Str 31 (+22) **Dex** 25 (+19) **Wis** 14 (+14)
Con 26 (+20) **Int** 14 (+14) **Cha** 23 (+18)

national pastimes of Monadhan, the inhabitants of the domain spend their time scratching a living from the harsh surroundings. Feeble rows of edible plants are grown against the walls of many shelters, where they are somewhat safer from raiding, but these tiny gardens provide scant sustenance and most act as little more than supplements to the foodstuffs that must be gathered from the wild. Most inhabitants of Monadhan fish, hunt, or gather what they need to survive on their own, sticking to the relatively safer jungle and waters nearest to the shantytown. Only the gangs can organize, with an acceptably small amount of infighting, the resources required to head into the deeper jungle in search of larger prey or rare resources. Artisans who can produce quality work or goods the beyond the skills of the average person are few and fiercely coveted by gang leaders, who force these crafters to either throw their lot in with a particular group of violent thugs or tread a knife-edged path of neutrality and sell to all comers.

The constant danger, both from wild beasts and treacherous neighbors, and the never-ending struggle to scrape a living from the harsh domain produces a gaunt, hard people with little regard for the lives and deaths of others. No funerals occur, nor do monuments to the dead exist in Monadhan; the only ritual for the fallen is a scramble to grab whatever might be of value before someone else does.

Arantor and the Heart of Darkness

Arantor shows little interest in ruling or even acknowledging his domain. He spends his time in the cavern beneath the shantytown he has claimed as a lair. There he paces endlessly, attempting to ferret out possible methods of escape, or at least trying to figure out how to end his wretched existence. When the ceaseless whisperings of his skeletal heart overwhelm him, he either slumps into a deathlike stupor that can last for days or flies into a rage, bursting from his cavernous lair to wreak remembered havoc upon the inhabitants above. He plays out the events of the night he slew his daughter and slaughtered the refugees: He first destroys the shantytown with his breath weapon before ascending into the clouds to argue, grapple with, and slay a phantom of his imagination. The carnage on the ground is real, however, and the population of Monadhan has learned to dread the thunderous beat of skeletal wings.

Arantor's Tactics

Arantor despises his existence and burns with hatred for those who do not share it. He charges into combat, recklessly attempting to inflict as much damage to as many targets as possible. He makes no move to avoid being mobbed, relishing the extra targets for *furious onslaught*. Arantor saves his *remnant breath*, which is not as quick to recharge as it once was, to capture the largest number. On Imrissa's turns, Arantor uses *betraying breath* as frequently as possible, and *influential whispers* otherwise, preferring to dominate strikers and controllers.

E1: Heart of Darkness

Encounter Level 25 (35,000 XP)

Setup

Arantor and the Heart of Darkness (A)

Arantor paces restlessly at the far side of a massive cavern, seemingly raving at the air to be quiet and cease its infernal whisperings. His one-sided argument prevents him from hearing any noise the PCs might have made in previous combats and gives him a –2 penalty to his passive Perception to notice the party.

Arcana or Religion Check

DC 26: *The strange areas of mist scattered around the cavern are laden with memories tied to the dark lord, Arantor. Perhaps what is contained within them could prove useful in vanquishing him.*

Dungeoneering Check

DC 23: *The PC notices that the subterranean stream has weakened the rock in the marked squares to the point where a sudden blow might shatter it.*

Features of the Area

Illumination: The cavern is dimly illuminated by phosphorescent fungus, glimmering insects, and the flickering balefire emanating from Arantor.

Stalagmites and Pillars: The large stalagmites and pillars are blocking terrain, and the areas of smaller stalagmites are difficult terrain and provide cover to those behind them.

Shadowed Crevices: The crevices marked (C) extend farther than they should and rapidly fill with strange mist and shadows. A character who enters one of these crevices must spend one entire turn navigating the oddly shadowed passage before emerging, at the start of his or her second turn after entering, from a different, randomly determined crevice. A DC 27 Arcana or Dungeoneering check made during the turn spent in transit allows the PC to choose from one of two randomly determined crevasses of egress.

Subterranean River: An underground stream runs just beneath the surface of the cavern in the indicated squares. It flows to the southeast at a rate of 4 squares per turn, although a successful DC 15 Swim check allows a character to tread water or swim within the stream. A series of stalactites plunge into the river as it exits the cavern; any character not actively attempting to dive below them is automatically stopped from continuing downstream. Crawling out of the stream and onto an adjacent square of rock counts as moving through difficult terrain, but the creature is otherwise unimpeded.

Thin Stone: The stone over the subterranean stream is thin and can barely sustain the weight of creatures standing upon it. Any melee or ranged attack can target a square of the thin stone instead of a creature. Bursts and blasts automatically target all the squares in their area, treating them as a single target. The stone has the following statistics: AC 20, Fortitude 20, other defenses 15; 15 hp. An attack that deals more than 15 damage destroys the stone square(s) it targeted, dropping anyone whose space contained even one of the squares into the stream.

Mists: Anyone standing in the mist-filled squares can access the skill challenge. See SC1 below.

Tactics

Arantor hurls himself into combat as soon as he detects the presence of the PCs. See the Tactics section in the statistics for Arantor for more information.

SC1: The Weight of Remorse

Although Arantor and the Heart of Darkness can be fought in the traditional manner, the pair is somewhat more powerful than one might expect. The key to defeating them is calling upon Arantor's remorse to weaken the power of the Heart of Darkness and the influence it has over him. The areas of dense mist indicated on the map are manifestations of Arantor's guilt and remorse, much like the Heart of Darkness is a manifestation of his betrayal and rage. A character standing in one of these areas assumes the likeness of one of Arantor's past victims and can engage in the following skill challenge:

The Weight of Remorse	**Level 23**
Skill Challenge	XP 0*
Arantor's past is a bloody one, full of carnage and slaughtered innocents. Taking the faces of his victims and calling on his remorse, you seek to distract, disable, or even turn his rage against himself.	
The PCs hope to call upon Arantor's conscience and sense of remorse to help them defeat the dark lord and the Heart of Darkness.	
Complexity	
3 (requires 8 successes before 3 failures).	
Primary Skills	
Bluff, Diplomacy, History, Insight.	
Bluff (DC 22 standard action)	
The PC spins stories about the lives of Arantor's victims, playing up their innocence and the tragedy of their undeserved slaughter.	
Diplomacy (DC 22 standard action)	

The PC begs and pleads with Arantor for mercy while playing the role of the victim he or she resembles or attempts to call upon Arantor's decency and honor.

History (DC 27 standard action)

The PC recites a litany of the places and peoples ravaged by Arantor in his time, allowing his or her allies to better tailor their stories.

A successful History check also grants a +2 bonus to the next Bluff or Diplomacy check.

Insight (DC 22 standard action)

The PC appeals to Arantor's conscience and feelings of remorse, slowly homing in on the correct path to take.

A successful check also reveals that a failed Intimidate check enrages Arantor. A check result of 27 or higher grants a +2 bonus to the next check in the skill challenge.

Secondary Skills

Arcana or Religion, Intimidate.

Arcana or Religion (DC 14 0 successes, minor action)

The PC uses their extensive knowledge of the flow of magic or the undead to discern the effects each check has had and steer their allies accordingly.

Using these skills doesn't count as a success or failure for the challenge. Instead, the result grants a +2 bonus or -2 penalty to the next character's check.

Intimidate (DC 22 1 success, standard action)

The PC uses their assumed faces to threaten Arantor with divine judgment or to demand to know why they were attacked.

A failed check enrages Arantor, providing him with a +2 bonus to attack rolls and a +6 bonus to damage rolls until the end of the PC's next turn.

Special

A character who has discovered Imrissa's name and uses it during this skill challenge gains a +2 bonus to all checks. If Imrissa's spirit is present, all PCs gain a +5 bonus to their checks. These bonuses do not stack.

Success

Arantor guards himself against the influence of the Heart of Darkness and does not act on Imrissa's turn until he uses *shattered prison*.

Each success has additional consequences as follows:

1st Success: The character deals 4d10 psychic damage to Arantor.

2nd: Arantor takes a -1 penalty to attack rolls and all defenses until the end of the encounter.

3rd: The character deals 4d10 psychic damage to Arantor.

4th: Arantor takes a -1 penalty to attack rolls and all defenses until the end of the encounter, and *betraying breath* recharges only on a 6 until Arantor uses *shattered prison*.

5th: The character deals 4d10 psychic damage to Arantor.

6th: Arantor takes a -1 penalty to attack rolls and all defenses until the end of the encounter.

7th: The character deals 4d10 psychic damage to Arantor.

8th: Arantor takes a -1 penalty to attack rolls and all defenses until the end of the encounter, and Arantor does not act on Imrissa's turn until he uses *shattered prison*.

Failure

The Heart of Darkness retains some of its hold on Arantor despite the appeals to his conscience. The effects already accrued remain, but the skill challenge can no longer be accessed during this encounter.

***Note** that PCs receive no experience for completing the skill challenge; they receive the relevant experience by defeating Arantor (which is now easier).

Killing Arantor and Escaping Monadhan

Physical destruction cannot end the existence of Arantor. Without the fulfillment of specific conditions, the remains of Arantor lie still and slowly discorporate into mist. Meanwhile the horizons darken and a strong wind begins to blow as a violent thunderstorm rolls in. At dusk Arantor awakes within the storm and reenacts the night he murdered Imrissa before returning to his lair. During the storm it is possible to depart Monadhan through the mists, emerging near the ruins of the original outpost. However, renewed patrols of death giants attempt to stop anyone from escaping in such a manner.

A somewhat less blunt, but just as challenging, method of escaping Monadhan exists. Speaking Imrissa's name as one enters the mists allows the speaker to travel the fog-bound paths that eventually lead to the ruins of Monadhan in the world. Unfortunately, trying to discover this is a challenge. Kas the Betrayer, fallen lieutenant and mortal enemy of the lich god Vecna, is aware of this method, having stumbled upon it when first cast down to the domain. Convincing Kas to divulge such a tidbit is a mighty feat, but clever players might glean it through other means. Gwenth and Rolain, the vampires that lead Kas's minions in Monadhan, might also be privy to this information and it would be easier, but still epically difficult, to pull it from them. Careful, well-hidden, observation of Arantor might reveal that he shudders slightly when the Heart of Darkness reaches Imrissa in its litany of the slain, but the characters have to discover the proper use of the name from another source, or perhaps they uncover it by observing those who know of it.

The only way to permanently destroy Arantor and dissolve the domain is to have him truly repent for the murder of his daughter and to utter her name in genuine sorrow. This monumental task would be all but impossible if it were not for what lies buried deep beneath the surface of Monadhan. The pit is not a totally natural occurrence; when Arantor murdered Imrissa, he cast her corpse down through the storm that raged above the outpost. Imrissa's body came to earth west of the refugee camp and punched through a thin ceiling of rock and into a subterranean opening. In the warped reflection that is the domain of dread, that shallow cavern became the massive, yawning pit that opens along the western cliffs. A twisted series of passages, disturbingly reminiscent of blood vessels, culminate in an open chamber. In the center, what appears to be a young, translucent silver dragon is curled in slumber. Awaking the image allows Imrissa's spirit to enter the domain, using the image as a vessel. If Arantor and the Heart of Darkness are defeated while Imrissa's spirit is present,

Arantor's mind clears at last and he tears the Heart of Darkness from his chest and crushes it before slipping into darkness. As his final sigh of "Imrissa" is uttered, the domain goes silent and the mists begin to pour into the valley like a tidal wave. The PCs and any good or unaligned residents find themselves back in the world at the ruins of Monadhan, and the traitorous inhabitants are shifted to another domain of dread.

Bahlik Gur and Death Giants

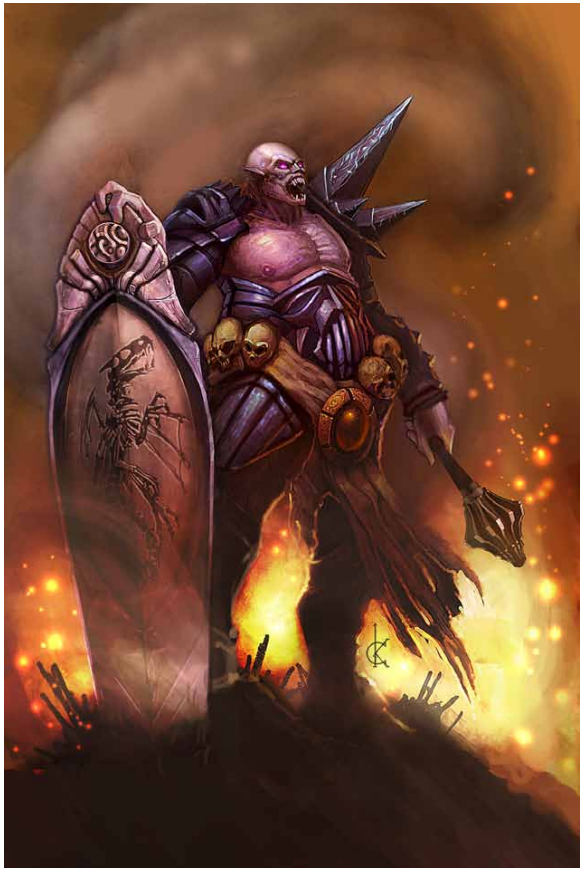
When Arantor awoke within Monadhan, the death giants were there. They have served him since then, primarily as bodyguards. How they could exist within the domain before the dark lord and what their true purpose there might be is uncertain. The giants themselves remain silent on the matter and Arantor has long given up on attempting to force conversation or information out of his supposed servants.

In addition to acting as a personal guard for Arantor, the death giants take great pains to prevent anyone from escaping the domain. Those who near their goal or are poking around where they do not belong regularly disappear, some no doubt meeting their end at the hands of a black-armored giant. If their task is the continuation of the domain, and by extension, its dark lord, and the prevention of incarcerated souls escaping, then it would seem they have a sort of understanding with the vampire Kas, who can travel to and from the domain without molestation.

The PCs are likely to catch only glimpses of the giants going about their business unless they attempt to disrupt the continuation of the domain. The giants stationed within the caverns of Arantor's lair attack intruders, but the wrath of the giants as a whole is aroused only by those who attempt to free those justly condemned to the domain or who discover the means of dissolving the domain. When roused for battle, the giants rarely travel without a group of enslaved Monadhan inhabitants to use as fodder and a ready source of soul shards.

Bahlik Gur's Tactics

Bahlik Gur leads his brethren from the front, directing his allies into tactically advantageous positions with *press the attack* even as he wades into combat. If



Bahlik Gur, Death Giant	**Level 23 Elite Soldier**
Large shadow humanoid (giant)	XP 10,200
Initiative +18	**Senses** Perception +19; darkvision
Soulcatcher aura 5; a creature that dies within the aura bestows one soul shard to Bahlik Gur (see *soul shroud*).	
HP 434; **Bloodied** 217	
AC 42; **Fortitude** 39, **Reflex** 33, **Will** 33	
Resist 20 necrotic	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 7	
Action Points 1	
Mace (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Reach 2; +29 vs. AC; 2d8 + 6 damage, and the target is marked.	
Double Attack (standard; at-will)	
Bahlik Gur makes two mace attacks. If he hits two different targets with them, he gains a +2 bonus to his next attack roll.	
Press the Attack (move; at-will)	
Close burst 10; targets 1 ally; the target can take a move action as a free action.	
Battle Fervor	
Bahlik Gur scores critical hits on attack rolls 19–20.	
Death Guardian (immediate interrupt, when an enemy marked by Bahlik Gur makes an attack that does not include Bahlik Gur)	
Bahlik Gur makes a mace attack against the enemy.	
Soul Shield (free, when an ally within 5 squares is targeted by an attack)	
Bahlik Gur expends one soul shard and the ally gains a +4 bonus to all defenses against the attack.	
Consume Soul Shard (minor; at-will) ✦ **Healing**	
Bahlik Gur expends one soul shard and regains 20 hit points.	
Soul Shroud	
The soul shroud contains soul shards that swirl around Bahlik Gur to protect and empower him. At the start of an encounter, the soul shroud contains four soul shards. While the soul shroud is depleted of soul shards, Bahlik Gur takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls.	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Giant
Skills Intimidate +18	
Str 28 (+20)	**Dex** 20 (+16) **Wis** 16 (+14)
Con 25 (+18)	**Int** 12 (+12) **Cha** 15 (+13)
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, mace	

Death Giant Soulcatcher	Level 22 Controller
Large shadow humanoid (giant)	XP 4,150

Initiative +16 **Senses** Perception +19; darkvision
Soulsnatcher aura 10; a creature that dies within the aura bestows one soul shard to the soulcatcher (see *soul shroud*).
HP 209; **Bloodied** 104
AC 36; **Fortitude** 35, **Reflex** 32, **Will** 35
Resist 15 necrotic
Speed 8

⊕ **Soul Dagger** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Reach 2; + 27 vs. AC; 2d6 + 8 damage and the target is immobilized until the end of the soulcatcher's next turn.

Soul Shrive (standard; at-will) ✦ **Necrotic**
Ranged 10; + 26 vs. Fortitude; the target is stunned and loses 1 healing surge at the start of its turn (save ends both). A target without healing surges takes damage equal to one quarter its total hit points. Each time the target loses a healing surge or takes damage from *soul shrive*, the soulcatcher gains a soul shard.

Soulfury Detonation (standard; must expend 3 soul shards; at-will) ✦ **Necrotic**
Area burst 2 within 10; + 26 vs. Fortitude; 2d12 + 6 necrotic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Consume Soul Shard (minor; at-will) ✦ **Healing**
The soulcatcher expends one soul shard and regains 20 hit points.

Soul Shroud
The soul shroud contains soul shards that swirl around the soulcatcher to protect and empower it. At the start of an encounter, the soul shroud contains four soul shards. While the soul shroud is depleted of soul shards, the soulcatcher takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Giant
Skills Intimidate + 18
Str 28 (+20) **Dex** 20 (+16) **Wis** 22 (+17)
Con 25 (+18) **Int** 12 (+12) **Cha** 15 (+13)
Equipment leather armor, dagger

possible, he attempts to engage more than one opponent to maximize the benefit he receives from *double attack* and to keep attention focused away from more vulnerable allies.

Death Giant Dreadguard	Level 22 Soldier
Large shadow humanoid (giant)	XP 4,150

Initiative +18 **Senses** Perception +19; darkvision
Soulcatcher aura 5; a creature that dies within the aura bestows one soul shard to the dreadguard (see *soul shroud*).
HP 209; **Bloodied** 104
AC 38; **Fortitude** 37, **Reflex** 33, **Will** 31
Resist 15 necrotic
Speed 7

⊕ **Mace** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Reach 2; +29 vs. AC; 2d8 + 6 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the dreadguard's next turn.

Death Guardian (immediate interrupt, when an enemy marked by the dreadguard makes an attack that does not include the dreadguard; at-will)
The dreadguard makes a *mace* attack against the triggering enemy.

Soul Shield (free, when an ally within 5 squares is hit by an attack; at-will)
The dreadguard expends one soul shard and the ally gains a +4 bonus to all defenses against the attack.

Consume Soul Shard (minor; at-will) ✦ **Healing**
The dreadguard expends one soul shard and regains 20 hit points.

Soul Shroud
The soul shroud contains soul shards that swirl around the dreadguard to protect and empower it. At the start of an encounter, the soul shroud contains four soul shards. While the soul shroud is depleted of soul shards, the dreadguard takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Giant
Skills Intimidate +18
Str 28 (+20) **Dex** 20 (+16) **Wis** 16 (+14)
Con 25 (+18) **Int** 12 (+12) **Cha** 15 (+13)
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, mace

Death Giant Dreadguard Tactics

Death giant dreadguards act in concert with their allies, normally staying near vulnerable or ranged comrades to protect them with *soul shield* and dishing out reprisals with *death guardian* to those who dare attack their allies. A pair of dreadguards supporting each other with *soul shield* makes a resilient front-line force.

Traitorous Spirit	Level 21 Minion Skirmisher
Medium shadow humanoid	XP 800

Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +11
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 35; **Fortitude** 35, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 30
Speed 6

⊕ **Shiv** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+ 26 vs. AC; 11 damage (13 damage with combat advantage).

Last Betrayal (when reduced to 0 hit points) ✦ **Weapon**
The traitorous spirit makes a *shiv* attack against each adjacent enemy.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Str 14 (+12) **Dex** 18 (+14) **Wis** 12 (+11)
Con 14 (+12) **Int** 10 (+10) **Cha** 12 (+11)
Equipment shiv

Death Giant Soulcatcher Tactics

Death giant soulcatchers normally lead off with a *soul shrive* targeting the most dangerous foe and attempt to keep at least one target under its effect to provide soul shards. They build toward and unleash *soulfury detonation* as soon and as often as possible, wasting shards on healing only if they are in danger of falling. *Soul dagger* is a weapon of last resort, mainly employed to gain a quick soul shard by sacrificing minions.

Traitorous Spirit Tactics

Traitorous spirits attempt to target those against which they have combat advantage whenever possible; setting up flanks where available but preferring stunned or otherwise incapacitated targets over all others, since they don't fight back. Hateful to the last, they lash out at those nearby when slain.

Vampires

Kas leaves the base and force of undead he keeps stationed in Monadhan under the command of two vampire lieutenants: Gwenth and Rolain. Gwenth acts as the eyes and ears of the band, sneaking about to locate possible prey and gathering information. She also removes any threats that might arise from the inhabitants of the shantytown with silent but vicious assassinations. Rolain handles the day-to-day operation of the base and leads the others in battle—if it comes to that. Both are loyal to Kas, even if they do find their current station to be a rather boring one.

Gwenth, Vampire **Level 23 Elite Skirmisher**
Medium shadow humanoid (undead) XP 10,200
Initiative + 21 **Senses** Perception +20; darkvision
HP 434; **Bloodied** 217
Regeneration 15
AC 37; **Fortitude** 35, **Reflex** 36, **Will** 34
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 15 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant (if Gwenth is exposed to direct sunlight, her regeneration does not function on her next turn)
Saving Throws +2
Speed 8, climb 4 (spider climb)
Action Points 1

⊕ **Bloodletter** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+28 vs. AC; 2d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 10 damage (save ends).

⸸ **Slashing Roll** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Gwenth shifts 4 squares and makes two bloodletter attacks at any point in the movement.

⸸ **Blood Drain** (standard; requires combat advantage against the target; recharge when an adjacent creature becomes bloodied) ✦ **Healing**
+26 vs. Fortitude; 2d12 + 6 modifier damage, and the target is weakened (save ends), and Gwenth heals 108 hit points.

⸸ **Eviscerate** (standard; ⚄ ⁞⁞) ✦ **Weapon**
+28 vs. AC; one or two targets; 5d6 + 8 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

✧ **Betraying Gaze** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Charm, Gaze**
Area burst 3 within 10; +26 vs. Will; the target makes an at-will attack against a target of Gwenth's choice and is immobilized (save ends).

Combat Advantage
Gwenth deals 4d6 extra damage against any creature granting combat advantage to her.

Mist Step (move; encounter) ✦ **Teleport**
Gwenth teleports 6 squares and becomes insubstantial until the end of her next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Bluff +22, Insight +20, Stealth +24
Str 24 (+18) **Dex** 27 (+19) **Wis** 18 (+15)
Con 25 (+18) **Int** 16 (+14) **Cha** 22 (+17)
Equipment leather armor, 2 short swords

Rolain, Vampire — **Level 23 Elite Soldier**
Medium shadow humanoid (undead) — XP 10,200

Initiative + 20 **Senses** Perception + 20; darkvision
HP 434; **Bloodied** 217
Regeneration 15
AC 41; **Fortitude** 38, **Reflex** 37, **Will** 36
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 15 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant (if Rolain is exposed to direct sunlight, his regeneration does not function on his next turn)
Saving Throws +2
Speed 7, climb 3 (spider climb)
Action Points 1

⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+ 30 vs. AC; 2d8 + 7 damage, and the target is marked until the end of Rolain's next turn.

Lethal Guard (opportunity, when an adjacent creature marked by Rolain makes an attack that does not include him or shifts; at-will)
Rolain makes a longsword attack against the triggering creature.

Blood Drain (standard; requires combat advantage against the target; recharges when an adjacent creature becomes bloodied) ✦ **Healing**
+28 vs. Fortitude; 2d12 + 6 modifier damage, and the target is weakened (save ends), and Rolain heals 108 hit points.

Shield Slam (minor; ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Weapon**
+28 vs. Fortitude; the target is stunned until the end of Rolain's next turn.

Dominating Gaze (minor; ⚅) ✦ **Charm, Gaze**
Ranged 5; + 27 vs. Will; the target is dominated (save ends, with a -2 penalty to the saving throw). *Aftereffect:* The target is dazed (save ends). Rolain can dominate only one creature at a time.

Irrefutable Challenge (standard; ⚂ ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Weapon**
Close burst 4; targets enemies; no attack roll; pull target within the burst 3 squares to a square adjacent to Rolain. A target that cannot end adjacent to Rolain does not move. Then Rolain makes a longsword attack against each adjacent enemy.

Mist Step (move; encounter) ✦ **Teleport**
Rolain teleports 6 squares and becomes insubstantial until the end of his next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Insight +20, Intimidate +19

Str 27 (+19)	**Dex** 24 (+18)	**Wis** 18 (+15)
Con 25 (+18)	**Int** 16 (+14)	**Cha** 22 (+17)

Equipment leather armor, 2 longswords

Gwenth's Tactics

Gwenth prefers to flit through the fray, targeting those who grant her combat advantage. She attempts to keep her ongoing damage on multiple targets, switching to *eviscerate* if she is attempting to finish a foe or if the targets she can reach with *slashing roll* are already taking her ongoing damage. She uses *blood drain* once she has taken 108 or more damage, hoping to recharge it at a later time. *Betraying gaze* she reserves for catching multiple enemies adjacent to each other or to immobilize mobile foes who are troubling her. She uses *mist step* when she must travel through or into a dangerous situation, trusting in the insubstantial it grants to see her through the latter case. Gwenth retreats to fight another day if the battle is obviously lost rather than fight to the death.

Rolain's Tactics

Rolain wades into the middle of the melee and seeks to engage the most competent melee fighter. He normally opens with *irrefutable challenge* to pull as many foes as possible into melee range and mark them, hopefully preventing them from fleeing. He uses *dominating gaze* on irksome mobile or ranged damage dealers and has them attack ranged or supporting enemies. When he has taken 108 or more damage, he uses *blood drain*, stunning the target with *shield slam* first if need be, in the hopes of getting multiple uses out of it. Rolain reserves *mist step* to position himself for a perfect *irrefutable challenge* or to go after especially annoying ranged characters. He fights to the end for a cause, but retreats if the battle is lost and there is nothing to gain from his sacrifice.

Adventures in Monadhan

The main adventure in Monadhan should be finding a means to escape and then making good on it, but any number of encounters or side adventures could take place within this larger context. You can find a few ideas below.

Gang War: After being attacked for being in the wrong place at the wrong time or spending too much time in a certain part of downtown, the PCs find themselves entangled in an ongoing turf war between rival gangs. One side obviously wants them dead, but can they trust the traitorous scum on "their" side?

Bad Blood: A villainous figure from a character's past has been condemned to Monadhan. Perhaps this person is the uncle that murdered the PC's parents for the family fortune, a despised ancestor that betrayed a clan fortress to orcs to save himself, or even a hated, traitorous general from the PC's country's past. Does the character exact revenge? What if the person claims to have repented and begs to return with the characters?

The Enemy of My Enemy: One of the vampires that oversees the base, or even Kas, approaches the PCs with an offer of an alliance. The vampire offers information or leads in return for a few, no doubt insignificant, favors. This could be the beginning of a lasting relationship, but can the characters trust or even condone associating with the likes of Kas the Betrayer?

About the Author

Daniel Marthaler is an avid gamer with soaring delusions of grandeur and dreams of breaking into the industry. Despite being 6' 3", he has a peculiar love of the wee races that populate the game, most notably the gnomes and kobolds.

EBERRON

FORGOTTEN REALMS

Domains in Eberron and the Forgotten Realms

By Logan Bonner

Illustrations by William O'Connor and Warren Mahy

The worlds of Eberron and Toril have far different types of religions. One of the few commonalities is that each deity oversees certain spheres of influence. These domains provide a way for a character to focus on a certain part of a deity's theme and to gain a closer connection to the deity by modifying at-will and Channel Divinity powers. (See *Divine Power* for the mechanical details of using domains.)

Your choice of domains, combined with the deity you worship, calls out certain traits of your character. A Tempus-worshiping cleric with the protection domain might be devoted to guarding allies in battle (and takes powers that give the most healing or defensive benefits). A different cleric might also follow Tempus, but choose the war domain instead, and lead allies charging into battle (choosing the battle cleric build and Strength-based powers).

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Also look for domains shared between multiple deities and use them as roleplaying opportunities. For example, your avenger devoted to Dol Dorn might hate the Mockery and his followers. Your god and the Sovereign of Betrayal and Bloodshed might share the war domain, but your wars are waged honorably. Eradicating the contemptible butchers of the Mockery will cause people to respect war as the noble undertaking it should be.

The domains associated with deities, and the way those gods perceive their domains, are described here.

Choosing Evil Without Being Evil

Moral ambiguity is one of the core traits that sets Eberron apart. A person living on Khorvaire can't be sure that that priest of the Sovereign Host is purely devoted to good. Likewise, an adventurer could gain the power of an evil religion's domains without being evil.

This is most common with the Dark Six. Many people, especially those living in barbaric areas, have good reason to worship the dark deities. Some even devote themselves to a member of the Dark Six (usually the Devourer) in hopes of preventing that deity from destroying them and their communities.

While the Blood of Vol has a great many evil followers, a PC interested in the preservation of life, or the divinity within each person, might take up the faith. It could even provide a compelling story arc as the character finds out frightening truths about the religion.

Eberron Deities

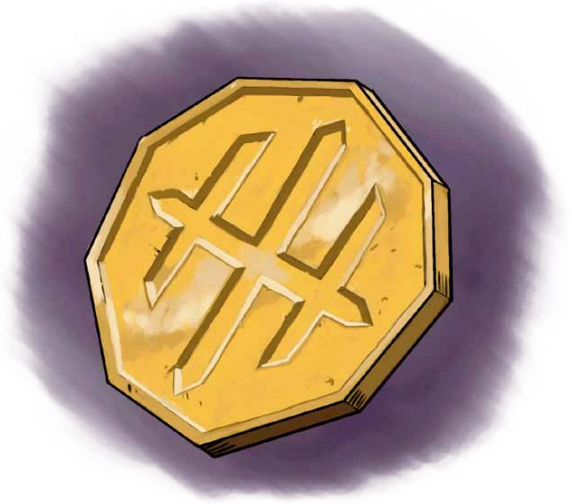
The deities of Eberron are distant from the people of their world, so much so that no one has proof that the gods exist. Consequently, the gods' predilections and spheres of influence described below are based on conjecture. The relatively small pantheon has many gods devoted to the spread of civilization or war—both of which are plentiful on Eberron.

GOOD, LAWFUL GOOD, AND UNALIGNED

Deity/Religion	Domains
The Silver Flame	Hope, justice, protection
The Sovereign Host	Civilization, fate, knowledge
Arawai	Life, storm, wilderness
Aureon	Arcana, justice, knowledge
Balinor	Earth, strength, wilderness
Boldrei	Civilization, justice, protection
Dol Arrah	Hope, sun, war
Dol Dorn	Skill, strength, war
Kol Korran	Civilization, skill, trickery
Olladra	Change, freedom, luck
Onatar	Civilization, creation, strength
The Dark Six (see below for worshiping the pantheon)	
The Traveler	Change, creation, trickery
The Blood of Vol	Death, undeath
The Path of Light	Freedom, skill, sun
The Spirits of the Past	Protection, vengeance, war
The Undying Court	Fate, knowledge, undeath

EVIL AND CHAOTIC EVIL DEITIES

Deity/Religion	Domains
The Dark Six	Destruction, wilderness
The Devourer	Destruction, sea, storm
The Fury	Madness, vengeance
The Keeper	Death, torment
The Mockery	Trickery, war
The Shadow	Arcana, darkness
Cults of the Dragon Below	Darkness, madness



The Sovereign Host

Arcana

Two deities have strong associations with the arcana domain.

Aureon, the god of formalized, refined forms of arcane magic, has sage and artificer followers who transform arcana into useful tools revere him.

On the other hand, the arcane power of the Shadow is far different—and far darker. He offers raw, uncontrolled (and possibly uncontrollable) power to the ambitious and shameless.

Change

Of the two deities affiliated with change, the fickle Olladra brings change seemingly at random. Frequently the fortune she brings is good.

By contrast, constant, ongoing personal change and growth falls more under the domain of the Traveler. His control over transformation, an extreme form of change, attracts the worship of shapeshifters.

Civilization

Under the broad umbrella of the Sovereign Host, societies thrive and civilization expands. Even the wildest among the Host focus their power on the parts of nature that can be tamed. However, three deities in particular have stronger ties to the domain of civilization.

The spirit of community and home flows from Boldrei, who watches over aspects that range from simple acts such as cooking all the way to prominent civic affairs such as coronations.

Kol Korran, the god of commerce, greases the wheels of society. Trade and wealth are under his power.

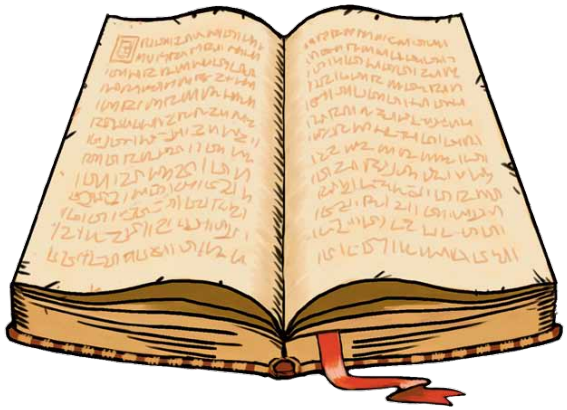
And, finally, scriptures attribute practical arts to Onatar. Civilization would fall apart without the craft and architectural technology given by this god of industry.

Creation

The domain of creation has a strong tie to two deities.

Onatar and his forge provide the gifts of industry and craft. The patron of smiths and magical crafters asks that his followers create new goods as a form of worship.

However, invention—the creation of entirely new items or concepts rather than repeating what already exists—is bound more closely to the Traveler.



Holy symbol of Aureon

Darkness

Those who seek darkness might turn to a cult or even the Shadow, depending on whether they are fulfilled by inner or outer darkness.

In terms of external darkness, the Cults of the Dragon Below believe great power exists in the darkness of subterranean chambers. Khyber gives boons to those who dwell in the darkness and spread its magic to the surface world.

For those looking inward, the literal shadow of the Sovereign Host's god Aureon, who is known as the Shadow, represents the darkness within every soul.

Death

The domain of death attracts the followers of the Blood of Vol or the Keeper.

The Blood of Vol obsesses over death, and the faithful primarily seek ways to avoid it as long as possible. Their highest goal is immortality.

The Sovereign of Death and Decay, the Keeper, can capture the souls of the dead. His followers believe he requires sacrifices of living creatures.

Destruction

The Dark Six are cruel and dangerous compared to the Sovereign Host, and each can bring terrible destruction in a different form. Among the six, the Devourer holds the greatest destructive power. The icon of nature's wrath, he can drown the lands with floods or shake cities apart with violent earthquakes.

Earth

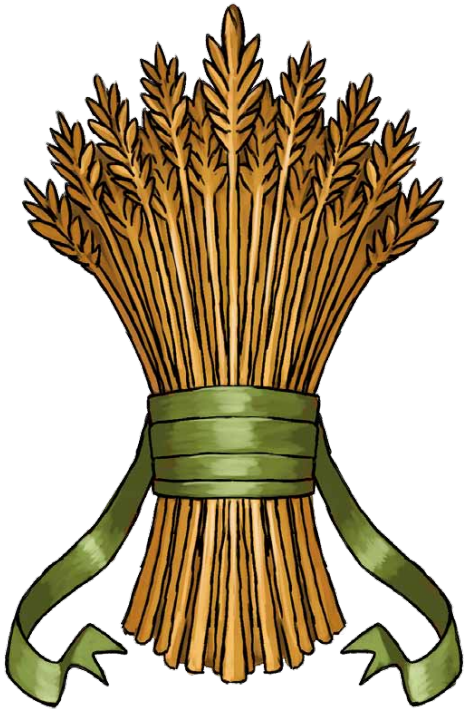
Untouched mountains and rock pulse with the divine power of Balinor. His dominion over nature includes the dust and earth.

Fate

The domain of fate attracts the followers of a wide swathe of deities as well as a specific faith.

The actions of the Sovereign Host are unavoidable. The church has spread so widely that they have power over fate by virtue of their sheer size and the number of gods within the pantheon. Some argue that when the Host truly wants to shape fate, the constituent gods channel their power, acting as one entity that performs their will with no need for individual consensus or debate.

The Undying Court ties the fates of the Aerenal elves across generations. An elf's fate after death determines how it leads its descendants, and the Court decides what that fate will be.



Holy symbol of Arawai

Freedom

A deity and a religion have a strong connection to the concept of control over one's destiny.

As the patron of rogues, Olladra promotes personal freedom. Those who follow her do what they want, as long as it doesn't harm others.

In terms of religion, the Path of Light has a specific idea of freedom. Through following the path, Lightspeakers seek to lift the oppressive Dreaming Dark and free all people from the dread it imposes upon the world.

Hope

The domain of hope attracts two types of followers: those who follow the Silver Flame, and those who worship honorable Dol Arrah.

The Silver Flame brings the light of hope to slay or drive away evil. As the Purified grow in number, the world gets closer to a perfected state where the dark and evil can no longer find purchase. They also bring hope to the less fortunate through generosity and kindness.

Among the Host, Dol Arrah represents the light of good within all people. She brings the hope of the sun to push away darkness, and the hope of peace to end war.

Holy symbol of Onatar

Justice

Some believe that the ideal of fairness is a virtue, and so they turn to the Silver Flame, Aureon, or Boldrei when they feel the need.

Adherents in the Church of the Silver Flame want good to prevail and the wicked to be struck down. These followers believe that the righteous and the humble deserve safety, which can exist only if the Purified oppose the unjust.

As the lawgiver among the Sovereign Host, Aureon is the patron of judges and lawyers, so he has an obvious connection to the domain of justice.

Aureon's wife Boldrei has followers who believe that she shows leaders of communities how to be fair and just to the people they govern.

Holy symbol of Boldrei

Knowledge

Among the pantheon and religions out there, the Sovereign Host and the Undying Court both have strong ties to lore, and, within the Sovereign Host, some turn specifically to Aureon when they seek guidance.

The Vassals who follow the Sovereign Host believe that the pantheon is connected to all knowledge. The gods cover so many areas of life that the knowledge they possess is broad and comprehensive. Because Aureon is the lord of all knowledge, some feel that he directs the actions of the Host using his talents.

Through the memories and expertise of countless generations of elves, the Undying Court commands vast reserves of knowledge.

Life

Arawai controls fertility, and the natural world flourishes under her gaze. She doesn't use her power to create rampant growth, but to provide for civilized people through agriculture.

Love

Though no deity has exceptional power over love, Boldrei oversees marriage and other aspects of family life related to love.

Luck

Olladra is the deity of fortune, both good and ill. Her whims can be unpredictable, and determining who will benefit from her boons is difficult at best.

Madness

Some view madness as a gift, and individuals who believe this might follow the Fury or join the Cult of the Dragon Below.

Those who become consumed by their passions or rage fall into the Fury's grasp. While the Fury's followers rarely descend into total, permanent madness, they bring out their uncontrolled, passionate sides with great frequency.

On the other hand, Cults of the Dragon Below fully give themselves over to the madness of creatures that dwell underground. Lunacy that stems from demons, aberrant creatures, or daelkyr won't stop until the mind it infects is totally consumed.

Protection

Those who seek to defend themselves against various threats, both natural and otherwise, can find solace and support from three different sources that are connected to the domain of protection.

The Silver Flame protects against all forces of evil. This includes guarding others against evil creatures, but many Purifiers consider it just as important to maintain moral standards to protect oneself from evil's influence.

Boldrei, the deity of community and safety, represents the protective shelter of the community and home.

The Spirits of the Past protect the history and glory of the elven people. The people of Valenar seek to protect their lands through isolation and military defense.

Holy symbol of Balinor

Sea

The Devourer has sole control over the oceans. Those lost at sea pray for the god's assistance.

Skill

Learning and displaying a mastery over various arts or activities is a goal to some, and those who seek to achieve this objective turn to Dol Dorn, Kol Korran, and the Path of Light.

Those who possess skill at arms and win at competitive sports and games please Dol Dorn. His followers are especially proud when they use their skill to succeed against great odds.

Kol Korran measures skill through the acquisition of wealth. Aptitude at thievery also comes from this god.

Skill is relative to the followers of the Path of Light. What's truly important is personal improvement, not how one's skill compares to others'.

Storm

Two deities have ties to the domain of Storm. Arawai brings the gentle storms that nourish crops. Her brother, the Devourer, brings destructive storms, floods, and droughts. People pray to both gods when it comes to matters of weather.

Strength

The followers of Balinor, Dol Dorn, and Onatar believe that these deities stand for an aspect of strength.

Balinor represents the wild might of the beasts—and the strength of the civilized people who best those beasts when hunting and trapping.

On the other hand, sheer physical might lies within the sphere of Dol Dorn. Soldiers and athletes pay tribute to him to bring them even greater strength.

As for Onatar, those faithful to him believe he grants strength to smiths and other manual laborers. He also imbues durability into their creations, from the steel of a sword to the stone of his shrines.

Sun

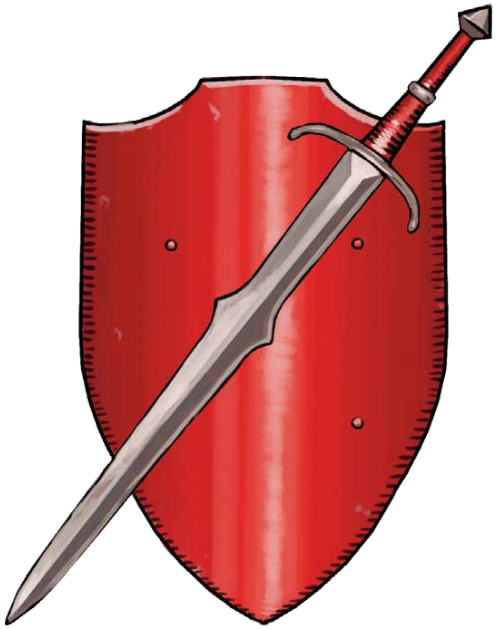
Those finding comfort or strength in the sun and all it symbolizes turn to Dol Arrah or the Path of Light.

Dol Arrah is the god of the sun and of concepts that mimic the sun's majestic presence, such as honor and glory.

Though the Path of Light doesn't truly relate to the physical sun in the sky, the religion does advocate the healing power of light itself. The Lightbringers oppose the Dreaming Dark and work toward bringing *il-Yannah*, the Dreaming Light, into being.

Torment

The Keeper tortures those who get lost in the dark and traps souls on their way to Dolurrh, the realm of the dead.



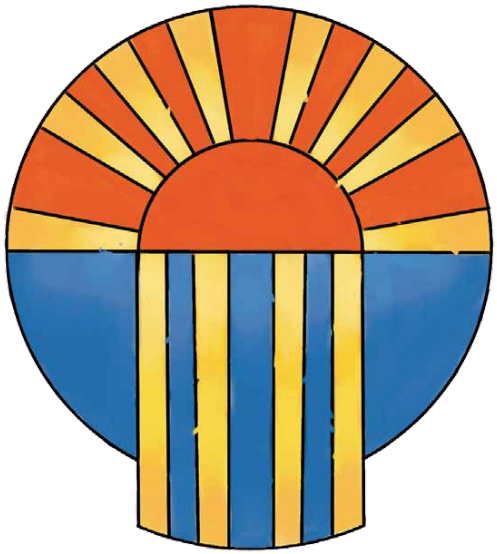
Holy symbol of Dol Dorn

Trickery

Three different deities represent trickery: Kol Korran, the Traveler, and the Mockery.

One could describe Kol Korran's sphere as charm or negotiation rather than trickery per se. Artful haggling and coming out ahead on deals are his specialties. Deception, for whatever end, is the province of the Traveler. His priests, and many of the changelings or other shapeshifters who follow him, practice deceit.

The Mockery spurs the cruelest form of trickery: betrayal. Deception of the Mockery's stripe causes ruin, pain, or death.



Holy symbol of Dol Arrah

Undeath

Of the religions out there, one has a more overt affiliation with undeath, and a second religion has veiled its connection to this domain.

The Undying Court is full of members who have become undead. The form they practice doesn't use the perverse magic that creates most evil undead. To these elves, undeath is a means for ancestors to share their wisdom with future generations, not a selfish means of prolonging life.

Though many of the faith's followers are unaware of this, the Blood of Vol's true rulers draw on the power of undeath. Lady Vol and many members of the clergy master rituals and other methods of attaining eternal life through dark magic.

Vengeance

Forgiveness doesn't come easy to everyone, and those who seek out revenge might revere the Spirits of the Past or the Fury.

The Tairnadal elves who worship the Spirits of the Past are a martial society. They seek honor through combat, and the vengeance they exact against those who anger them is swift and harsh.

The Fury thrives on strong emotions. Her followers seek vengeance when someone threatens what they're passionate about. They quickly come to hate those who slight them, and they seek retribution.

War

Those interested in worship attribute the domain of war to several deities and religions: Dol Arrah, Dol Dorn, the Spirits of the Past, and the Mockery. Among the Host, Dol Arrah supports honorable combat and sacrifice in battle and is worshiped by many paladins. However, Dol Dorn is the greatest god of war. Soldiers worship him, and he supports those who fight for duty, not out of greed or bloodlust. The Spirits of the Past guide the actions of the militant Tairnadal elves. They make war to uphold the glory and renown of the elven people. War made in the Mockery's name is brutal and bloody. This brother to Dol Arrah and Dol Dorn helps those who wage unjust war.

Wilderness

A number of deities have connections to the domain of wilderness.

Life-affirming Arawai wants wilderness to thrive, but not to overtake civilization. Her followers use the products of nature, but make sure not to exploit or abuse the wild.

Balinor supports all nature, even in its violent and dangerous forms. Survival, as well as killing to survive, is an essential aspect of nature.

Just as the Sovereign Host as a pantheon supports civilization, the Dark Six reinforce the dark dangers of the wilderness. The chaotic lawlessness outside the cities feeds the dark pantheon.

Holy symbol of Olladra

Forgotten Realms Deities

A plethora of gods influence Toril. Through their actions, they have shaped the course of history in the Realms in a way less assertive or less meddlesome gods couldn't have. Each greater god has three domains, and the others have two apiece.

GOOD, LAWFUL GOOD, AND UNALIGNED

Deity	Domains
Amaunator	Civilization, justice, sun
Angharradh	Hope, protection
Bahamut	Justice, strength
Berronar Truesilver	Life, protection
Chauntea	Earth, hope, life
Corellon	Arcana, skill, wilderness
Garl Glittergold	Creation, trickery
Gond	Creation, knowledge
Ilmater	Freedom, hope
Kelemvor	Death, fate, justice
Mielikki	Freedom, wilderness
Moradin	Creation, earth, protection
Oghma	Knowledge, skill, trickery
Selûne	Arcana, change, moon
Sheela Peryroyl	Love, wilderness
Silvanus	Life, storm, wilderness
Sune	Love, skill, trickery
Tempus	Protection, strength, war
Torm	Civilization, justice, protection
Tymora	Change, luck
Waukeen	Civilization, knowledge

EVIL AND CHAOTIC EVIL

Deity	Domains
Asmodeus	Knowledge, torment, tyranny
Auril	Storm, winter
Bane	Civilization, tyranny, war
Beshaba	Fate, trickery
Cyric	Madness, strife, trickery
Ghaunadaur	Destruction, earth, madness
Gruumsh	Destruction, storm, strength
Lolth	Darkness, poison, strife
Loviatar	Torment, vengeance
Luthic	Earth, protection
Shar	Darkness, knowledge, undeath
Sseth	Arcana, darkness
Talona	Destruction, poison
Tiamat	Tyranny, vengeance
Umberlee	Sea, storm
Zehir	Darkness, poison

Arcana

Two prominent good deities provide inspiration to practitioners of arcane magic, and a third coaxes his evil followers to use subtle, sinister arcana.

Corellon finds great beauty in arcane magic, with its many forms and diverse flourishes. Of course, the most skilled shapers of magic to his eyes are his eladrin. He inspires them to craft magic that is not merely functional, but beautiful, and those who follow the god appreciate arcana as both aesthetic and, in its own way, holy.

Selûne is a patron of magic that affects the ebb and flow of the world, or echoes the comforting moon-

light. Most of her followers are bards and others who use charm and radiant magic.

Sseth encourages his yuan-ti followers to use the magic of manipulation, illusion, secrecy, and darkness. Dark sacrifices fuel the serpent god's divine power, and his followers' spells wrench their arcane energy from people or the world itself. Working arcane magic according to Sseth's will does not require a conscience.

Change

Selûne and Tymora represent two different circumstances for change.

The goddess of the tides and the cycles of the moon, Selûne sees change as a natural, continual process essential to life and the world. To her eyes, everything that changes will some day change back.

Tymora believes people should embrace the change in their lives—no matter how arbitrary it might seem—and seek out experiences that will alter their lives. Change, especially random change, invites growth.

Civilization

The domain of civilization falls under the auspices of four deities.

Amaunator supports the growth of cities so that they can develop and enforce regimented laws. The predictability of orderly cities appeals to the god.

The rule of law is vital to Torm as well (though its importance lies in bringing justice, not in providing stability). Torm's great temples tower over the streets of many cities, showing his devotion to civilization.

The merchant trade in cities, and the trade routes protected by the forces of civilized areas, fall under Waukeen's gaze.

For the evil Bane, the purpose of civilization is control. Maintaining rulership without a power structure is impossible, so Bane supports civilizations over which he can rule.

Creation

Garl Glittergold, Gond, and Moradin each have a hand in the domain of creation.

Garl Glittergold appreciates the fine work of gemcutters and smiths. While the brilliant creations they make please the god, his true influence supports the work ethic and communal spirit of the creators.

Of all the Faerûnian deities, Gond's connection to crafting is greatest. Creation is a purpose unto itself, and the use or consequences of an invention are not Gond's concern.

A shaper of life as well as objects, Moradin's greatest creations were the dwarves. Works created in the Soul Forger's name are meant to last and are created from the most valuable metals, stones, and gems.

Religious Sects

Within one church, multiple sects spring up that are devoted to one of the god's domains over the others. Among the good churches, the tension between these sects is civil—a philosophical disagreement. In evil churches, the class between sects can turn violent.

One of the most prominent factional splits is within Oghma's church. It long ago split into two prominent sects: the lorekeepers of the Orthodox Church of Oghma and the namers of the Oghmanyte Church in Exile. While both churches seek out knowledge, the lorekeepers claim greater devotion to the skill domain, since they pride themselves on their memorization of facts and bardic training. The namers, after being forced out of Sembia, had to adapt, and they have become experts at using trickery to attain new information from unlikely sources.

Darkness

No deity embodies darkness as strongly as Shar, whose entire existence echoes the primeval dark of nothingness. To her, darkness is not merely a way to conceal activities, but a tool to eventually eradicate the light—especially the light of her sister, Selûne.

Three other deities have less powerful influence over darkness, which they use to cloak the evil machinations of their followers. Lolth conceals her drow and uses the darkness to strike fear in the hearts of her enemies. The serpent deities Sseth and Zehir both command yuan-ti followers. They come into jealous conflict, since each wants to control all the serpent folk and to tear the power over darkness from the other god's grasp.

Death

Kelemvor's most important domain is death. As the Judge of the Damned, he teaches that death is inevitable and natural. Kelemvor's views on death are balanced and respectful. Lives should not be taken lightly, but attempting to overextend one's life—especially through undeath—is unacceptable.

Destruction

The act of annihilation pleases the deities Ghaunadaur, Gruumsh, and Talona.

Ghaunadaur rules formless creatures such as slimes and oozes, which serve as mindless forces of destruction. While the Elder Eye likes destruction for its own sake, he truly revels in the pain and suffering of any creatures being destroyed.

Gruumsh's destruction comes at the hands of his rampaging orc hordes. The rampaging creatures destroy cities, people, and the land itself. Gruumsh desires the destruction of the elves and eladrin above all else.

The littered bodies and abandoned towns that remain in the wake of plagues reflect the destructive power of Talona, the Mistress of Disease. Her philosophy about sowing disease goes little deeper than her own whims.

Earth

Deities have different views on all sorts of matters, and how they perceive and utilize the domain of earth is no exception.

Chauntea has possessed a vast bastion of power related to the earth ever since she gave life to Toril at the genesis of the world. Earth is the source of life thanks to Chauntea's gift.

While the Elder Eye likes destruction for its own sake, he truly revels in the pain and suffering of any creatures being destroyed.

Moradin protects the rock and mountains as the home of his dwarves. The deep places, where his people collect the precious materials that provide their livelihood, are also sacred to Moradin.

In dark, dripping caverns, Ghaunadaur lurks. The bizarre abominations under his sway spawn and grow deep within the earth.

The orc deity Luthic draws great strength and endurance from the earth. She claims that the orcs can draw valor from the caves, and that the race will abide as long as they stay close to the earth and to Luthic.

Fate

When an outcome is in question, some turn to those deities responsible for the domain of fate for a hint of what will come next.

Seeing all stages of life as natural parts of a cycle, Kelemvor understands that fate is inexorable. Creatures, and even gods, should take comfort in the fact that fate is guiding their lives to a proper end.

Beshaba mirrors the power of her sister, Tymora, causing bad luck and ill fortune. She instills fear in those who would refuse to follow her, promising misfortune and dire fate. Lady Doom's manipulation of fate is a tool to bring worship from the unwilling.

Freedom

Two deities, Ilmater and Mielikki, hold the domain of freedom within their areas of influence.

The freedom Ilmater grants comes from his own suffering. His primary mission is to keep others from experiencing hardship, but this also brings them a measure of freedom from pain and bondage.

To Mielikki, pure freedom is a natural state. Just as the animals of the forest are free to travel where they will, people should do likewise.

Hope

People can have all manner of hopes: hope that a trying situation turns out for the best, hope that a child grows up to be a wise and caring person, and even hope that the current generation's efforts bear fruit for all to follow. Four deities have hope as one of their domains.

Angharradh and Chauntea both see hope in the planting of seeds and the birth of animals. Each new life is full of potential and majesty. Chauntea, though she hates to see the destruction of nature, also anticipates its rebuilding and regrowth.

Ilmater's tenets encourage hope. This includes helping those who suffer, facing down tyranny, and possessing great spiritual faith. The Broken God perseveres and overcomes his pain so he can be a beacon of hope to followers.

Justice

Justice can come when following legal procedures to their conclusion or as the result of fighting for what is right and fair. Each of the four deities with ties to the domain of justice have their own ideas on how to serve justice best.

Amaunator's sense of justice is tied to law. He expects the law to be followed to the letter, and only rarely does he make exceptions.

The sense of honor and justice that Bahamut follows is far removed from Amaunator's approach. The God of Dragons advocates a "greater justice" that includes fighting against evil and toppling oppressive regimes.

Dead Gods

The gods that now watch over Toril have outlived or replaced numerous gods that came before. These dead gods might no longer exist in the forms they once inhabited, but some of their residual power still infuses the world—especially the things they created. If you want to be a character with a connection to a dead god (perhaps even a long-lived person who worshiped the god when he or she was still alive), talk to your DM about using a domain formerly associated with that deity.

The Judge of the Damned, Kelemvor, brings justice after death. His sense of justice is vast, and he can judge one's goodness based on the whole of his or her life.

Though Kelemvor judges the dead, Torm is the god of pure law in the living world. No evil or unjust law can stand in defiance of Torm's will.

Knowledge

The domain of knowledge has special significance to five deities: Gond, Oghma, Waukeen, Asmodeus, and Shar.

Gond favors practical knowledge, especially if it can be used in craft and invention. His followers keep meticulous records of their creations and share them among one another.

The Lord of Knowledge, Oghma, considers knowledge more valuable than any treasure. He is especially influential over raw, innovative ideas. Some of his best followers are lorekeepers and bards.

Waukeen believes knowledge is best when it is shared, preferably for a price.

Asmodeus craves knowledge, especially information of secrets or agreements that will help him rule over others. To worship Asmodeus is to share your knowledge with the Supreme Master of the Nine Hells.

The goddess Shar covets knowledge's shadow half: secrets. Her followers share secrets only with one another, as the Mistress of the Night has decreed.

Life

Berronar Truesilver, Chauntea, and Silvanus each have a stronger interest in the domain of life than their fellow deities.

To Berronar Truesilver, the Revered Mother of dwarves, new life is an extension of the family. Kinship is the best, and most essential, part of life.

Chauntea and Silvanus both encourage the creation of new life, though Silvanus cares primarily about life in the wild. Also, Chauntea has a respect for all living things, but Silvanus brings down his wrath upon those who harm places of natural beauty.

Love

Two deities call the domain of love their own. The first, Sheela Peryroyl, represents romantic love and courtship, especially among halflings. She's more connected to natural beauty than to the aesthetics of art.

Sune, the second deity, bids her followers to find and collect beauty in all forms. Love must be demonstrated daily. Many nobles in cities follow her teachings. Lady Firehair thrives on the love of her followers.

Luck

Of the two deities who hold sway over the domain of luck, Tymora gives good fortune to the bold and adventurous by rewarding risks with luck. Quick escapes and great windfalls are her gifts. Tymora doesn't sow ill fate; that falls under the province of her sister, Beshaba.

Madness

Madness comes in several forms, and two deities, Cyric and Ghaunadaur, provide followers with their blessings.

When it comes to madness, Cyric leads by example. His mind grows more insane all the time. The

fact that he sometimes unpredictably returns to seeming sanity all but proves his true madness.

Ghaunadaur dwells alone in the Dismal Caverns, letting his madness consume him. The abominations he unleashes bring madness wherever they strike.

Moon

Selûne's power is inseparable from the moon. The mysterious forces that shape the tides, turn ordinary creatures into lycanthropes, and influence fertility are all shaped by the Moonmaiden.

Talona uses poison for the same purpose as disease: to cause misery and pain.

Poison

Three deities have an affinity for the domain of poison, which can come both in the form of words and deadly toxins.

Talona uses poison for the same purpose as disease: to cause misery and pain. Her favorite poisons are those that cause extended anguish before killing their victims.

Lolth and Zehir bless the poisons of their favored creatures and people: spiders and drow for Lolth, and snakes and yuan-ti for Zehir. Both gods also make their presence known in the poison of deceitful words.

Protection

Life can bring with it many challenges and threats, and followers turn to one or more specific deities when they seek to protect themselves in some manner.

Angharradh represents the defense of the fey, especially against the forces of Lolth. Vigilance against betrayal is the Queen of Arvandor's greatest protection.

The protection of the dwarf clans is tied to two deities: Berronar Truesilver and Moradin. The Soul Forger focuses on protection by strength of arms, and his wife believes also in protection of dwarven traditions and families.

Tempus's protection comes in the form of armor and shields, of ramparts and barricades. The Foehammer protects all valiant defenders, but never cowards.

The path of duty brings Torm's protection. Those who take up righteous causes gain his boons.

Luthic offers the protection of earth and stone to orcs who acknowledge the power of the goddess and of the sheltering caves.

Sea

Umberlee alone holds power over the untamed sea. Anyone who wants to cross into her domain must pay sufficient tribute or draw her wrath. The Queen of the Depths lashes out without hesitation against those who anger her.

Skill

Three deities have the domain of skill, and of them, Corellon and Oghma are patrons of artistic skill. The elf god primarily supports visual art, arts created with magic, and all arts of the eladrin. The Lord of Knowledge inspires skill at music and invention.

Any skill that leads to more beauty can be enhanced by Sune's power. Aesthetically pleasing art and architecture please her, but she also wants each of her followers to show skill at improving his or her personal appearance.

Storm

None can deny the power and might of storms, and four deities have control over this domain.

Silvanus creates storms to nourish and replenish the forest, though he sometimes uses their might to bring his wrath against those who disturb the balance of nature.

Ice, hail, and freezing wind swirl within Auril's storms. She desires to see all the lands covered in ice.

Gruumsh takes on his Talos aspect when he wants to call on powerful storms. Though he keeps a separation between his two roles, he sometimes calls great thunderheads in front of his rampaging orc hordes.

Umberlee creates the storms that tear apart ships at sea and batter coastlines with water and wind. Proud of this power, she instructs her followers to destroy those who attribute Umberlee's storms to another deity.

Strength

Both Tempus and Gruumsh bring strength in battle. Tempus rewards fighting honorably, without using tricks or creating wanton destruction. The One-Eyed God, on the other hand, believes in crushing foes through any means and scorching their lands. The orc god not only supports the strong, but encourages his followers to slaughter the weak.

A third deity, Bahamut, also welcomes strength from his followers; strength of purpose and character are both traits that the Platinum Dragon likes to reward.

Strife

Though strife is a part of anyone's existence, the domain falls within the power of two deities: Cyric and Lolth.

Cyric's fall into madness only strengthened his ability to bring chaos and strife. His whims invariably lead to destruction and discord.

Lolth possesses talent for strife, and her drow are the instrument she uses to disrupt her enemies' plans. When the Queen of Spiders isn't directly involved in a matter, she might send followers to disrupt the dealings of several enemies who are dealing with one another.

Sun

To Amaunator, the sun is a revealing light. Dealings and activities should be obvious to all, according to the Keeper of the Yellow Sun. Those who carry out their business in the light of day fulfill Amaunator's desire for order and consistency.

Torment

Asmodeus and Loviatar have dominion over the domain of torment, and of the two, Asmodeus torments the damned of the Nine Hells. He uses torture to break adversaries and impose his will upon them, or as punishment for foes captured by his forces.

The torment meted out by Loviatar, the Maiden of Pain, and her followers comes along with small kindnesses or tricks of desire. They find this drives home the true magnitude of pain. Loviatar brings pain through ice, fire, and the whip.

Trickery

Trickery has a place with several deities: Garl Glittergold, Oghma, Sune, Beshaba, and Cyric. Each of them has a preference as to how their followers trick others, of course.

Pranks and light-hearted trickery delight the gnome deity Garl Glittergold. To him, a sense of humor is an essential component of personality, society, and family.

Oghma likes the creative, inventive aspects of bluffing and trickery more than the ability to deceive. Clever words please the Lord of Knowledge when applied to satire or debate, but he doesn't abide lies or rumors.

Aspects

Some deities take on multiple aspects, which can display conflicting attitudes and enhance the powers of one domain over another. A few examples follow.

Gruumsh gains greater power over storms while in his Talos aspect. Many worshipers focused on that domain call the god Talos instead of Gruumsh, and they represent him differently.

Amaunator spent long years in the guise of Lathander. People who want to focus on the optimistic concepts of dawn and vitality might consider the sun domain primarily a part of the Lathander aspect.

Selûne worshipers might focus on one of her fey aspects. Sehanine Moonbow is a mysterious aspect associated with the moon domain, and the flighty Hanali Celanil is tied to the change domain (or to love, though this isn't considered part of Selûne's repertoire in her regular form).

Sune encourages her followers to use seemingly harmless deceptions. The Lady of Love knows that flirtation, flattery, and tricks of beauty have far more power than most are willing to acknowledge.

Beshaba disperses random misfortune, sometimes by tricking her targets into ruining their own fates. Her trickery also gets her more tribute, since her followers overstate her power and cause others to worship the Maid of Misfortune out of fear.

The most dangerous falsehoods come from the lips of Cyric, the Prince of Lies. The god requires little motivation to craft great deception, and his intrigues have brought great death and danger to Toril.

Tyranny

Ruthless, overwhelming power used for ill typifies the domain of tyranny, and Asmodeus, Bane, and Tiamat all hold sway over this particular domain.

Asmodeus wants absolute control over as many subjects as he can get. The devil-god won't be satisfied until all Toril submits to his will.

Bane demands absolute loyalty from his followers and expects them to spread his tyranny by conquering their neighbors in the Black Lord's name. Though Asmodeus competes for the title, Bane is still the strongest embodiment of tyranny in Faerûn.

Though she claims to fight against the other gods' tyranny, Tiamat wants to enslave the people of the world in her own name.

Undeath

Shar's domain, the Towers of Night, connects to the Shadowfell. Though the Mistress of the Night doesn't take particular advantage of the connection, she does command some power of the undead. Those who call on her power over this domain are expected to keep their use of undead secret and concealed in the shadows.

Vengeance

The need for revenge drives various individuals, and Loviatar and Tiamat both love to use vengeance to their advantage.

Loviatar believes the only response to suffering is to inflict equal or greater pain in reciprocation. Vengeance is only worthwhile if it is painful.

The spiteful Dragon Queen Tiamat is vain and prideful. Even the slightest insult against her brings down the wrath of her worshipers.

War

War brings with it death, pain, and acts of heroism. Two deities have a decided interest in this domain.

Tempus represents all sorts of warriors on any side of conflicts. His way rewards valor and might, regardless of who is going to war.

On the other hand, Bane spurs wars that bring glory to his name and extend his dominion. Wars carried out in his name are bloody and savage.

Wilderness

The forests, plains, deserts, mountains, and other places untouched by civilization have strong affiliations to four deities.

The lush reaches of the Feywild owe much of their beauty to Corellon. The forest homes of the eladrin are the archetypal examples of the beauty he brings to nature.

Mielikki and Sheela Peryroyl both champion the cause of harmony with nature. They believe that people can reap the benefits of nature without overusing or exploiting it.

Silvanus can bring life to the wild easily, and he instructs the druids who protect his woods. Though his vengefulness has been exaggerated, he is more militant in the protection of wilderness than other deities are.

Winter

Auril, the Cold Goddess, represents all the deadliest aspects of winter. She covers all things in ice and brings chill breezes, hoping to kill creatures with the bitter cold.

About the Author

Logan Bonner joined Wizards of the Coast in 2006 as an editor on Dungeons & Dragons. He had no experience in the industry prior to joining Wizards of the Coast, and marvels that his clever ruse has lasted this long. After doing some class design work for 4th Edition on the side, he joined the mechanical design team. His previous editing projects include *Magic Item Compendium* and *Monster Manual V*, and he wrote about half of the *Eberron Survival Guide*.

Fighter Essentials

By Robert J. Schwalb
Illustrations by Steve Belledin, Leonardo Borazio, and Tim Hibbetts & Frank Wall - Empty Room Studios

"Welcome. By coming here, you have proven that you have the desire to learn. But do you have what it takes to become a warrior? We'll give you discipline. We'll give you strength. We'll toughen you up. What we can't give you is the will to complete the training. It doesn't matter if noble blood flows through your veins or if you are the last son in some dunghill speck of a town. Do you have the courage to fight? Look deep into yourselves. Can you do this? There is no shame in leaving now. If you have a single doubt in your mind, go. Seek another path. If not, be welcome, worms. It's time to fight."

~Captain Janus Storn

Some classes are more iconic to Dungeons & Dragons® than others. Without a doubt, the fighter has been an enduring presence in adventuring parties through every edition of the game. The fighter serves as the foundation on which many parties stand. As the reliable presence who holds fast in the face of adversity, the fighter is a constant and dependable ally who carries heroes through dungeons and ruins, encounter after encounter, without complaint. The fighter's lasting popularity originated in the class's ease of use. A new player could figure out the fighter's function and mechanics with little trouble at all. With the 4th Edition fighter, ease of use remains, but it hides a deeper complexity that can enrich playing these characters.

A fighter's role is clear. Fighters are defenders, and all fighters use the same methods to lock down their enemies. However, these characters differ wildly in how they approach each fight. Some tough it out by shrugging off injuries as they clobber their opponents. Others dance around their foes, snaking their blades through defenses to deliver punishing attacks. Good fighter tactics go a long way toward developing an effective character who can contribute to the game in meaningful ways.

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The Basics

"I know you're eager, but before you get to handle naked steel, you've got to learn how to hold a sword without cutting yourself first."

–Captain Durgen Anvilson

No matter what race you choose, what feats you pick, or what powers you bring to bear in battle, your job remains the same. As a fighter, you lock down enemies. You keep them pinned down so they can't attack your allies. You might have the means to dish out damage, but killing enemies is second to preventing your opponent from reaching your comrades. The fighter achieves this in two ways: Combat Challenge and Combat Superiority.

Combat Challenge

All defenders have the ability to place the marked condition on opponents. As described in the *Player's Handbook*, the marked condition applies a -2 penalty to attack rolls on any attack that doesn't include the source of the marked condition. Defenders aren't alone in marking opponents; some clerics, rogues, and other classes have powers that can apply these conditions too. What sets defenders apart, though, is the ability to place the mark each round and the ability to exploit the mark to a greater effect.

Whenever you make an attack against an enemy, you can choose to mark that enemy. So if you rip through an opponent with a greataxe or shoot an opponent with your longbow, you can slap the condition on the bad guy. Marking enemies at range (or with a reach weapon) does provide a benefit, but it's inefficient and the annoying penalty probably won't stop the creature from murdering your wizard.

Only when you mark enemies adjacent to you do you truly lock down the opponent. A marked enemy that shifts or makes an attack that doesn't include you as the target lets you make a melee basic attack as an immediate interrupt. That's incentive enough to keep the bad guy's eyes on you.

To Mark or Not to Mark

One thing players forget is that marking enemies is optional. You don't have to mark every enemy you attack. In fact, there might be times when marking an enemy is a bad idea. Figuring out when to use Combat Challenge is just one of many decisions you have to make in the thick of combat. Luckily, a few tips could help you out. All are pretty obvious, but if this is you're first time playing a fighter, would you rather read it here or have a bossy player "tell" you how to play your character?

Burst Powers: Smacking every enemy in a close burst is fun, but dealing damage to everyone around you makes you real popular with the bad guys. It's tempting to slap a marked condition on every target in the burst, but odds are, every creature is going to accept your invitation and beat the crap out of you, and before you know it, you'll be on your back waiting for the leader's *inspiring word* to stand you up again. Worse, the basic attack from Combat Challenge is an immediate action, so at most, you can make one extra attack against an enemy that ignores you. So unless you have buckets of healing surges and oodles of hit points, marking everyone you can is a bad idea unless it's absolutely necessary.

Two Defenders: Having two defenders in your adventuring group means fewer monsters make it through you to maul your allies. However, time and time again, defenders zero in on the same target, swapping marks with each hit. In only two instances should you attack a creature already locked down by another defender. In the first scenario, your group has only one monster left on the map. In this case, choose the defender who can hold the monster best and have that defender mark the monster. The second situation occurs when the marked creature is kicking the crap out of the other defender. In this case, you, along with your allies, should step up to the plate and help out.

Low Hit Points, Low Surges: If you mark a monster, you're telling that monster: "Hey, I'm important, please hit me." If you're low on hit points or are scraping the bottom on surges, don't mark the monster. Novices make this mistake all the time.

Combat Superiority

The other thing fighters do to keep their opponents pinned down is kick butt with opportunity attacks. All fighters add their Wisdom modifier to opportunity attack rolls, and, if the target provoked the attack by moving, a hit stops the target dead in its tracks. This feature is important, but many players make the 500 gp (component cost for Raise Dead) mistake and ignore Wisdom much to their dead controller's frustration.

What makes this class feature so sexy is that you can use it whenever a creature provokes an attack, once for each creature's turn. Let's say you marked an enemy controller. The controller could attack you with a paltry melee attack, but it wants to melt your flesh with a ranged attack. If the controller tries to shift to avoid the opportunity attack, you can smack it with Combat Challenge. If the controller decides not to shift and instead risks the opportunity attack while you're breathing down its neck, you have an even better chance of encouraging the controller to use its

melee attack next time—if it's still alive.

In short, both Combat Challenge and Combat Superiority are class features. Don't worry about dealing buckets of damage with your attacks. If you put yourself in the right place and against the right sorts of foes, you keep up just fine.

Fighter Builds

When you choose fighter as your character class, you're faced with several other choices to define your character's tactics and presence in the game. From ability scores to weapons, powers to feats, the options are abundant and only grow over time. To help you navigate through character creation, each class includes several builds. These frameworks can serve as an architecture that assists you in making good decisions when it comes to feats, powers, and gear. As the *Player's Handbook*® points out, you don't have to choose a build. However, builds are akin to roadmaps. If you don't know the way, they're pretty helpful, but if you've traveled the route a couple times, you might find you don't need them anymore.

When you create a fighter, think about the kind of fighter you want to play. The four builds each correspond to a particular play style:

- **Durability:** If you want to shrug off attacks and keep fighting no matter what, the battlerager is your build.
- **Damage:** If you believe the best defense is a good offense and want to deliver incredible damage, the great weapon fighter is your best bet.
- **Defense:** If you believe the best offense is a good defense, the guardian fighter is made for you.
- **Versatility:** If maneuverability and multiple attacks are your things, check out the tempest fighter.

Battlerager Fighter

"Some will tell you that giving into your passion is the surest way to die. To some extent, giving into your anger can result in unfortunate outcomes, but more often than not, your wrath will keep you fighting long after your will gives out."

—Captain Tytos Long

Fighters sometimes find themselves in trouble when their eyes are bigger than their appetites. When they mark too often, enemies swarm them and before they know it, they're kissing the Raven Queen's hem. For fighter players who like abuse, the battlerager fighter build from *Martial Power*™ is the answer.

Battlerager Vigor

Durability is the battlerager fighter's strength; it sets these aggressive warriors apart from their more skillful counterparts. The Battlerager Vigor class feature as first presented in *Martial Power* brought with it numerous challenges and opportunities, all of which have been resolved with the recent updates. While battlerager fighters no longer accumulate temporary hit points in staggering numbers, they still gain enough to mitigate the damage they take when doing their job and defending their allies.

Temporary Hit Point Gain: The primary benefit gained from the Battlerager Vigor class feature is temporary hit point gain. Rather than rely on a leader character to hand them out or depend upon another character with leader as a secondary role, you can generate your own temporary hit points by hitting with a melee or close attack. Each time you do so, you gain temporary hit points equal to your Constitution modifier plus any temporary hit points the power would normally grant.

Two things come from this revised rule. First, you can draw temporary hit points from *any* melee or close attack, so you can benefit when using power-swap powers, magic item powers, and any other power that meets this loose criteria. Second, you add your Constitution modifier to the temporary hit points earned. So, if you're hitting with an invigorating power, you gain twice as many temporary hit points. Better still, when you miss with an invigorating attack power, you still receive your Constitution modifier in temporary hit points.

If you've played a battlerager fighter with the rules as originally presented, be aware that the revision put an end to cumulative temporary hit points and temporary hit point gain when you are attacked. It was for balance, but the old way caused a bookkeeping nightmare. Be sure to review the updates to make sure you understand how the revised class feature works.

Damage Boost: The other thing battlerager fighters have is boosted damage. To benefit from this extra damage, you have to be in light armor or chainmail, you have to have temporary hit points (to receive a +1 bonus), and you need to be wielding an axe, hammer, mace, or pick (to increase the +1 to +2).

Hidden Costs

Battlerager Vigor looks like a good deal. Giving up a paltry +1 bonus to attack rolls to receive an endless supply of temporary hit points is just too good to be true. Be advised, it just might be.

The biggest problem you'll face with this build is Constitution. To make the class feature work, you need a decent Constitution (16 or higher for most characters). You already need a high Strength and a good Wisdom, so to keep your Constitution high, you have to plunder from another ability. Taking points away from Dexterity might work, but remember, you lose initiative and your Reflex suffers. Moving points from Wisdom means you're not as good as other fighters in locking down enemies and your Will suffers.

Another problem area is armor. The temporary hit points are great, but unless you have a high Dexterity, hide armor is probably not the armor you want to be wearing against a lurker or a brute. Chainmail helps. But unless you're a dwarf, you're now slow and saddled with a penalty to key mobility skill checks. A +1 bonus to damage rolls does make up for this a bit, but is it enough if your accuracy suffers when you plunder Strength for Constitution? Can you afford to wield an axe, hammer, mace, or pick when you are 2 or even 3 points behind another fighter in your attack bonus?

Power Selection

Fighter exploits with the invigorating keyword benefit battlerager fighters the most. However, these powers deal low to negligible damage. Instead, they impose conditions that lock down the opponent or force it to grant combat advantage, thus enabling rogues to do their thing and improving your accuracy for the next attack you make. It's best to mix your arsenal with invigorating powers and high damage powers to ensure you can first reduce the target's defenses and then destroy your enemy.

Battlerager fighters are also good at grabbing and holding an enemy's attention. Close burst powers not only lock down several enemies at once, but you can also absorb their melee attacks to some extent when they invariably respond. Don't rely completely on close burst powers since you might not be surrounded at all times. Having one or two of these powers handy is a good idea.

Great Weapon Fighter

"Sometimes the best tactic is to hit the enemy harder than it can hit you."

—Captain Janus Storn

The great weapon fighter is the damage-dealing build. Armed with punishing two-handed weapons, these fighters sacrifice defense to boost their offense. A great weapon fighter equipped with the right powers can come close to strikers in dispatching enemies.

"War College: Secrets of the Great Weapons" goes into extensive detail on the great weapon fighter build, so for more information, be sure to check out that article.

Guardian Fighter

"I've heard a lot of twaddle about finding yer inner strength, lookin' fer the biggest weapon and whatnot, and it makes me sick. You want to know the secret to surviving on the battlefield? Don't get hit. You want to know the secret to victory? Fight smarter. It's not high magic, people!"

—Captain Durgen Anvilson

It's easy to dismiss the guardian fighter as an inferior build. A high AC and decent accuracy hardly seem worth the meager damage and likely slow speed. If you want hit points or maneuverability or damage output, this is not the build for you. But if you want to be the best at being a defender, the guardian fighter is worth a look.

Defense is central to the guardian fighter build. These fighters protect themselves by using heavy shields and wearing heavy armor to make sure they aren't hit. Not getting hit not only means keeping hit points, but it also means thwarting nasty conditions that can interfere with you doing your job.

Power Selection

Keeping all three defenses high might result in a low Strength. A high accuracy weapon and Fighter Weapon Talent compensate (as does the Weapon Expertise feat), but they don't address your reduced damage output. Luckily, several fighter powers provide additional benefits for wielding specific weapons, and these benefits can result in extra damage, better containment, and so on.

Other powers you might pick include any powers that provide bonuses to your attack rolls (including the much-maligned *sure strike*) or powers that allow you to hit several opponents at once. You can risk locking down two or more enemies since you have the defenses to compensate for additional attacks you'll face.

Finally, you're armed with a shield, so it's wise to choose powers that require or interact with shields. *Tide of iron* is crucial, but *shield bash* from *Martial Power* is also a solid choice for your encounter power.

Tempest Fighter

"Size and strength are poor cousins to speed and cunning."
—Captain Verus Polston

Speed, maneuverability, and frequency are all the tempest fighter's hallmarks. A tempest fighter (*Martial Power,* page 6) eschews heavier armor and weaponry to close on opponents quickly and rip them apart with swift attacks. As two-weapon wielders, tempest fighters can strike twice in a round, giving them two chances to chip away at opponents, while strikers move into position to deliver the killing blow.

Tempest Technique

Any fighter armed with a weapon and an off-hand weapon can make attacks using either weapon. The same fighter can also choose fighter powers that allow two attacks, one for each weapon. In fact, a character could take the Fighter Weapon Talent class feature and the Two-Weapon Fighting feat and perform well in combat. The trouble is that the off-hand weapon will deal less damage than the primary, thus making the trade-off from a shield to a short sword or an execution axe for a longsword and kukri a poor trade.

To compensate, the Tempest Technique provides accuracy bonuses to attacks with off-hand weapons and damage boosts for wearing light armor and more for wielding two off-hand weapons. A +1 damage bonus converts a short sword into a longsword (based on average damage), while a +2 bonus jumps the weapon to a greatsword (again, on average). All this comes at the cost of light armor, and a low AC, or chainmail costing in speed.

Power Selection

There's no mystery in selecting powers for your tempest fighter. As a two-weapon wielder, any power that allows you to use both weapons should be your first choice. For utility powers, focus on mobility and defensive ones.

One obvious way to diversify your arsenal is to invest in the Warrior of the Wild feat. Swap out fighter powers for ranger powers using the power-swap feats. Doing this improves your secondary role as a striker and broadens your tactical options when you corner an enemy.

Abilities

All fighters favor common ability scores regardless of build. Strength, Constitution, Dexterity, and Wisdom all rank high in a fighter's needs. However, the degree to which you should invest in abilities other than Strength depends on your build and tactics.

Strength

Fighters use Strength as their attack ability and so it should be your highest ability score. A common trap players fall into with Strength is to dump all their points to reach an 18. The result is often a quasi-striker with a glass jaw, which comes from a decision made from misunderstanding what the fighter is all about. Remember, your job is to lock down enemies. You mark your opponent whether you hit or miss. The couple of points you sacrifice from Strength is a worthy sacrifice if it means keeping your friends alive.

Great weapon fighters and guardian fighters both gain the Fighter Weapon Talent class feature. A +1 bonus might seem minor, but it allows the fighter to compete with paladins and wardens even if the character only has a 16 or 17 Strength. Similarly, Tempest Technique also provides a +1 bonus to attack rolls made using off-hand weapons. Furthermore, you can choose a high accuracy weapon such as a longsword or bastard sword to help offset a low attack ability.

Constitution

Having a high Constitution seems like a good idea. A good score here gives you abundant hit points, extra healing surges, and a high surge value—all things a fighter needs to have. Diverting too many points to Constitution means taking points away from Dexter-

ity and Wisdom. Your Strength already modifies your Fortitude defense, which is boosted further by your class bonus, so having a Constitution that's too high is redundant and makes you vulnerable to attacks that target other defenses.

The battlerager fighter is the big exception. Since your Constitution modifier determines the temporary hit points you gain, you need a high score here to realize the build's benefits. You're already vulnerable to artillery and controller attacks, so make sure you adjust your tactics accordingly.

Dexterity

Dexterity seems like a wasted investment. If you're wearing heavy armor, you don't add your Dexterity (or Intelligence) modifier to your AC. However, you can still apply the bonus to Reflex and still benefit from the increase to initiative checks—a key concept for fighters who like to lock down artillery and controllers before the area attacks explode all around them. Guardian fighters and tempest fighters should not ignore this ability.

Wisdom

Making opportunity attacks represents half of your responsibilities as a defender. As a fighter, you apply your Wisdom modifier as a bonus to opportunity attacks. Wisdom also keeps your Will defense high, so unless you like being victimized by charm, fear, and psychic attacks, you'd do well to not ignore this ability.

Ability Score Spreads

Even with advice given here and in the build entries, assigning your scores can be tricky. Your weapons, tactics, powers, and racial adjustments all influence your decisions about where to place your ability points. The following spreads are designed to be a foundation for your decisions. If you play a race that gives you a bonus to one ability, you might shift points from that ability to another one. Or, if you choose a race that boosts Intelligence and Charisma, you might have to alter your spread in a considerable way to stay effective. In short, start here and adjust to taste.

Battlerager Spread		
Str 16	Dex 11	Wis 13
Con 16	Int 8	Cha 10

Great Weapon Spread		
Str 17	Dex 12	Wis 13
Con 14	Int 8	Cha 10

Guardian Spread		
Str 15	Dex 14	Wis 14
Con 14	Int 8	Cha 10

Tempest Spread		
Str 16	Dex 15	Wis 13
Con 13	Int 8	Cha 10

Race

Race is probably the most important decision you'll make. Not only does race grant adjustments to your abilities, but it also provides tactical benefits that can guide your feat, weapon, and even build choices.

You should look at the race's ability score adjustments first, but don't let them be the only guide. Just because a minotaur grants a bonus to Strength and Constitution doesn't mean it makes a good guardian fighter. Humans might have only a +2 bonus to one ability, but the +1 bonus to all defenses is a lot like gaining a +2 bonus to two scores and a +4 bonus to a third. The following table suggests builds based on race and takes in account ability score adjustments, but also integrates the racial features and how they come into play.

Race and Build	
Deva	Guardian Fighter
Doppelganger	Tempest Fighter
Dragonborn	Great Weapon Fighter
Drow	Tempest Fighter
Dwarf	Battlerager Fighter
Eladrin	Tempest Fighter
Elf	Tempest Fighter
Genasi	Great Weapon Fighter
Gnoll	Battlerager Fighter
Gnome	Guardian Fighter
Goliath	Battlerager Fighter
Half-Elf	Battlerager Fighter
Half-Orc	Tempest Fighter
Halfling	Tempest Fighter
Human	Guardian Fighter
Kalashtar	Guardian Fighter
Minotaur	Great Weapon Fighter
Shadar-Kai	Tempest Fighter
Longtooth Shifter	Battlerager Fighter
Razorclaw Shifter	Tempest Fighter
Revenant	Tempest Fighter
Tiefling	Guardian Fighter
Warforged	Great Weapon Fighter

HEROIC TIER FEATS

Name	Prerequisites	Benefit
Agile Superiority	Fighter, Combat Superiority	Use Dexterity in place of Wisdom for Combat Superiority
Bloodseeker	Tiefling, fighter	+2 damage to marked creatures
Focused Superiority	Fighter	Wisdom modifier to damage with opportunity attacks
Mobile Challenge	Fighter, Combat Challenge	Shift 1 with hit from Combat Challenge
Savage Axe	Fighter	Constitution modifier extra damage with opportunity attacks
Shielded Resurgence	Fighter	With shield, second wind bonus lasts until end of next turn
Body Shield	Fighter, Small size	+2 to AC and Reflex with versatile weapon
Stout Shield	Fighter	Shield bonus also applies to Fortitude
Swift Spear	Fighter	Opportunity attacks with spear slides enemy 1
Wary Fighter	Fighter	+2 bonus to Insight and Perception; substitute Wisdom for Dexterity on initiative
Defensive Challenge	Fighter, Combat Challenge	With shield, grant adjacent ally +2 to all defenses

Heroic Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a character of any level who meets the prerequisites.

Agile Superiority

Prerequisites: Fighter, Combat Superiority class feature

Benefit: The bonus granted by your Combat Superiority class feature is equal to your Dexterity modifier instead of your Wisdom modifier.

Bloodseeker

Prerequisites: Tiefling, fighter

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls against bloodied enemies marked by you.

Defensive Challenge

Prerequisite: Fighter, Combat Challenge class feature

Benefit: When an adjacent enemy marked by you shifts or makes an attack that doesn't include you as a target while you are using a shield, you give an adjacent ally a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of your next turn as an immediate interrupt.

Focused Superiority

Prerequisite: Fighter

Benefit: While you are wielding a one-handed weapon, you gain a bonus to damage rolls equal to your Wisdom modifier with opportunity attacks.

Mobile Challenge

Prerequisites: Fighter, Combat Challenge class feature

Benefit: After you hit an enemy with a melee basic attack granted by your Combat Challenge class feature, you can shift 1 square.

Savage Axe

Prerequisite: Fighter

Benefit: When you hit with an opportunity attack with an axe, you deal extra damage equal to your Constitution modifier.

Shielded Resurgence

Prerequisite: Fighter

Benefit: When you use your second wind while you are using a shield, you regain extra hit points equal to your Wisdom modifier, and the bonus to defenses lasts until the end of your next turn.

Small Warrior's Defense

Prerequisite: Fighter, Small size

Benefit: While you are using a versatile weapon in both hands, you gain a +2 bonus to AC and Reflex.

Stout Shield

Prerequisite: Fighter

Benefit: Your shield bonus also applies to your Fortitude.

Swift Spear

Prerequisite: Fighter

Benefit: When you hit with an opportunity attack with a spear, you can also slide that enemy 1 square to a space adjacent to you.

Wary Fighter

Prerequisite: Fighter

Benefit: You use your Wisdom modifier instead of your Dexterity modifier when rolling initiative. You also gain a +2 feat bonus to Insight and Perception checks.

Paragon Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a character of 11th level or higher who meets the prerequisites.

Advantageous Perspective

Prerequisites: 11th level, fighter, Small size

Benefit: When you make a melee weapon attack, you score a critical hit on a natural roll of 19 or 20 against Large or larger creatures granting combat advantage to you.

Dizzying Mace

Prerequisites: 11th level, fighter

Benefit: When you hit an enemy with a power that dazes the target while you are using a mace, the target also takes a penalty to attack rolls equal to your Constitution modifier for as long as it remains dazed by your attack.

Plunging Blade

Prerequisites: 11th level, fighter

Benefit: When you make an opportunity attack with a light blade, you score a critical hit on a natural roll of 19 or 20.

Staggering Challenge

Prerequisites: 11th level, fighter, Combat Challenge class feature

Benefit: When you hit an enemy with a melee basic attack granted by Combat Challenge while you are using a shield, you can knock the target prone instead of dealing damage with the attack.

PARAGON TIER FEATS

Name	Prerequisites	Benefit
Advantageous Perspective	11th level, fighter, Small	Critical hit Large or larger enemies that grant combat advantage on a roll of 19 or 20
Dizzying Mace	11th level, fighter	Daze target with mace and target gains penalty to attacks
Plunging Blade	11th level, fighter	Critical hit with light blade opportunity attack roll of 19 or 20
Staggering Challenge	11th level, fighter, Conbat Challenge class feature	Combat Challenge with shield, forgo damage from Combat Challenge to knock prone

Fighter Exploits

The following daily powers are designed with the tempest fighter in mind, but any fighter wielding two weapons can benefit by selecting these exploits.

Ruinous Assault — Fighter Attack 1

Your weapons move with incredible speed and open deep gashes in your opponent.

Daily ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding two melee weapons.
Primary Target: One creature
Primary Attack: Strength vs. AC (main weapon)
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: You make a secondary attack.
Secondary Target: One creature other than the primary target
Secondary Attack: Strength vs. AC (off-hand weapon)
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).
Miss: Half damage.

Dancing Defense — Fighter Attack 5

Each time your blade connects you strike again—or feint, allowing you to dance away.

Daily ✦ Martial, Stance, Weapon
Minor Action **Melee** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding two melee weapons.
Effect: Until the stance ends, once per round when you hit with an attack using your main weapon, you can make a melee basic attack with your off-hand weapon against a different target or shift 1 square and gain a +2 power bonus to AC and Reflex until the start of your next turn.

Spinning Razor Strike — Fighter Attack 5

You move with such alacrity that your enemies can't follow your movements: strike, step, strike, step, and finally one last strike to end your opponents' threat.

Daily ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding two melee weapons.
Primary Target: One creature
Primary Attack: Strength vs. AC (main weapon)
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier + Dexterity modifier damage.
Effect: You shift 1 square and make a secondary attack.
Secondary Target: One creature other than the primary target
Secondary Attack: Dexterity + 1 vs. AC (off-hand weapon)
Hit: 1[W] + Dexterity modifier damage.
Effect: You shift 1 square and make a tertiary attack against a different target.
Tertiary Target: One creature other than the primary or secondary targets
Tertiary Attack: Dexterity + 1 vs. AC (main weapon and off-hand weapon)
Hit: 1[W] + Dexterity modifier damage.

Punishing Storm — Fighter Attack 9

You strike twice at the foe, dance aside, and deliver a sudden strike with your secondary weapon to send the enemy sprawling.

Daily ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding two melee weapons.
Primary Targets: One or two creatures
Primary Attack: Strength vs. AC (main weapon)
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: If you hit at least once, you can shift 1 square and make a secondary attack.
Secondary Target: One creature other than a primary target
Secondary Attack: Strength vs. Fortitude (off-hand weapon)
Hit: 1[W] damage, and the target falls prone.

Masterful Parry — Fighter Attack 15

You catch the enemy's attack with your off-hand weapon and drive your main weapon into your enemy's unprotected body.

Daily ✦ Martial, Reliable, Weapon
Immediate Interrupt **Melee** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding two melee weapons.
Trigger: An enemy marked by you would hit you with a melee attack.
Target: The triggering enemy
Primary Attack: Strength + 2 vs. AC (off-hand weapon)
Hit: You take half damage from the triggering attack and make a secondary attack against the same target.
Secondary Attack: Strength + 2 vs. AC (main weapon)
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). You can shift 1 square.
Miss: Half damage, and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn. You can shift 1 square.

Adaptable Maneuver — Fighter Attack 19

A swift attack tests your enemy's defenses and tells you whether you should drop into a defensive posture or strike again.

Daily ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding two melee weapons.
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC. Make the attack twice, once with your main weapon and once with your off-hand weapon.
Hit: 3[W] + Strength modifier damage on the first hit. If both attacks hit, you can add 2[W] to the damage dealt or have the target take a -4 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).

Storm's Fury Strike — Fighter Attack 25

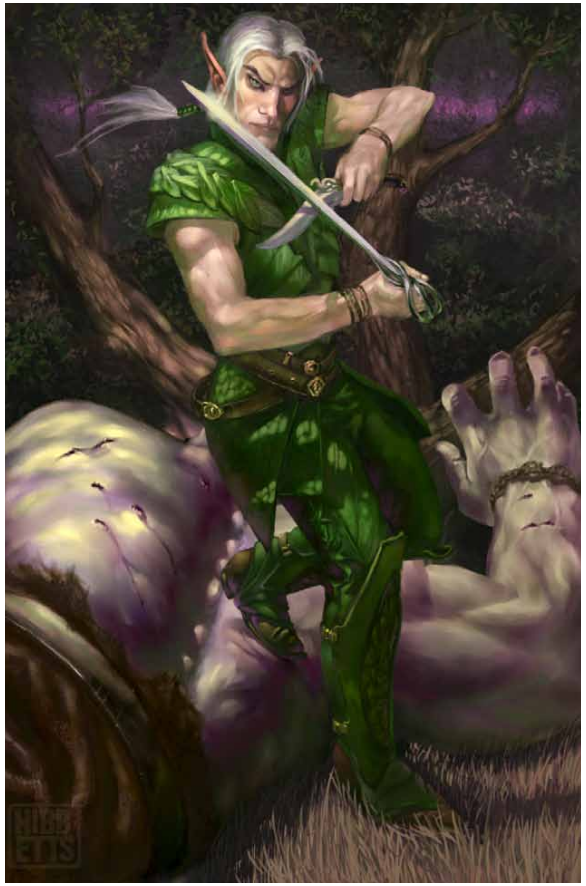
Your weapons pound into your foes to give you the room you need to face off with your true target.

Daily ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Close** burst 1
Requirement: You must be wielding two melee weapons.
Primary Target: Each enemy in burst you can see
Primary Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares.
Miss: No damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.
Effect: You shift a number of squares equal to your Dexterity modifier and make a secondary attack.
Secondary Target: One creature other than the primary target
Secondary Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, and ongoing 10 damage (save ends).
Miss: Half damage.

Enemy Undone — Fighter Attack 29

Your opponent falls back beneath your attack's ferocity, but it can't escape you: You step forward to finish the job you started.

Daily ✦ Martial, Reliable, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding two melee weapons.
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC. Make the attack four times, twice with your main weapon and twice with your off-hand weapon.
Hit: 3[W] + Strength modifier damage on the first hit. On each additional hit, the target instead takes 1[W] damage. If all four attacks hit, the target takes 10 extra damage. You then push the target 1 square per hit and can shift 2 squares into a square the target occupied.
Special: If you score a critical hit with this power, you can't score another critical hit with it on the same turn.



Paragon Paths

Bladestorm Duelist

"Your armor, your weapon: These are the instruments of your defeat."

Prerequisites: Fighter, Tempest Technique class feature, proficient with rapier

Blessed with keen reflexes and stunning speed, you never developed a taste for heavy armor and cumbersome weaponry. You felt it was far more effective to dispense with the weighty gear so that you could stay fast on your feet, dance around your opponents, and deliver swift strikes every bit as nasty as a single blow from a greataxe. Other fighters might scoff at your thin rapier and your parrying dagger, but you wipe their smiles off their faces when you duck beneath their attacks and stick your blades in gaps between their armor.

Bladestorm Duelist Path Features

Canny Defense (11th level): While wearing light armor and not using a shield, you gain a +2 bonus to AC and Reflex.

You gain a bonus to your initiative checks equal to your Wisdom modifier.

Precise Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to make an attack, you can reroll one or two attack rolls (but must use the new result).

Bladestorm Technique (16th level): While wielding a rapier and an off-hand light blade, you gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls with your rapier, and any rapier you use gains the high crit property.

Bladestorm Duelist Exploits

Blade Feint — Bladestorm Duelist Attack 11

Leading with your off-hand weapon, you draw your opponents' attention from the real threat.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding two melee weapons.
Target: One creature
Primary Attack: Strength vs. AC (off-hand weapon)
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage, and you make a secondary attack with combat advantage against the same target.
Secondary Attack: Strength vs. AC (main weapon)
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage. Until the end of your next turn, the creature takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls.

Nimble Step — Bladestorm Duelist Utility 12

When your enemy gives you an opening, you step forward to take it.

Daily ✦ Martial, Stance
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: You shift 1 square. Until the stance ends, when an enemy marked by you provokes an opportunity attack from you, shifts, or makes an attack that does not include you as the target, you can shift 1 square as a free action.

Elaborate Assault — Bladestorm Duelist Attack 20

You weave your blades in a complex pattern, and as your enemy follows your movements, you lash out with an unexpected strike.

Daily ✦ Martial, Reliable, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding two melee weapons.
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC. Make the attack three times: first with your main weapon, then with your off-hand weapon, and then with your main weapon. Before each attack, you shift 1 square.
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage on the first hit, and you gain a +2 power bonus to AC and Reflex until the end of your next turn. On the second hit, the target instead takes 2[W] damage, and it takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of your next turn. On the third hit, the target instead takes 3[W] damage, and it grants combat advantage (save ends).
Special: If you score a critical hit with this power, you can't score another critical hit with it on the same turn.

Wrathbearer

"Go ahead. Hit me. I dare you."

Prerequisites: Fighter, Battlerager Vigor class feature

You were a terrible student. Wild and unpredictable, no lesson stuck with you. No matter how hard you tried, you'd revert back to your old reckless ways. Your problem might have come from a life among savage and warlike people, or you could just have a nasty temper. In either case, your time at the war college was brief when it was clear the instructors had nothing to teach you. In your adventures since, you have learned to channel your wrath into your attacks. When you look back on the stodgy lessons and unbearable drills, you laugh because you have learned a better way to kill.

Wrathbearer Path Features

Mounting Rage (11th level): When you miss with an invigorating attack power, you gain a +2 bonus to your next attack roll.

Savage Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, you gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls and add 1[W] extra damage to damage rolls with weapon attacks until the end of your next turn.

Endless Endurance (16th level): You increase your maximum hit points by twice your Constitution modifier.

Wrathbearer Exploits

Explosive Outburst Wrathbearer Attack 11

Your wrath reaches a boil and you explode with violence, ripping your weapon through your foes in one savage sweep.

Encounter ✦ Invigorating, Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Close** burst 1
Target: Each enemy in burst you can see
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, and the target is marked by you, it falls prone.

Mocking Target Wrathbearer Utility 12

No attack against you is good enough to escape your scathing, infuriating tongue.

Daily ✦ Martial, Stance
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: Until the stance ends, when an enemy attacks you, it is marked until the end of your next turn, unless the attack reduces you to 0 hit points or fewer.

Unequaled Might Wrathbearer Attack 20

Your attack hits your enemies hard and they cannot find the strength to stand.

Daily ✦ Invigorating, Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Close** burst 1
Target: Each enemy in burst you can see
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Strength modifier damage, and the target falls prone. Until the end of the encounter, when the target stands up while adjacent to you, you can make a melee basic attack against the target as an opportunity action.
Miss: Half damage, and the target falls prone.

About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb is a freelance game designer with numerous design and development credits to his name including *Draconomicon 2: Metallic Dragons, Primal Power,* Dragon® *Magazine Annual 2009, Adventurer's Vault 2, Divine Power,* Eberron® *Player's Guide,* Eberron *Campaign Guide, Player's Handbook 2, P2 Demon Queen's Enclave, Manual of the Planes, Martial Power, Draconomicon I: Chromatic Dragons,* the Forgotten Realms® *Player's Guide,* and numerous articles in Dragon and Dungeon® magazines. Robert lives in Tennessee with his wife Stacee and his sweet potato cats.

Bazaar of the Bizarre
Primal Treasures

By Kolja Raven Liquette
Illustrations by Jeffrey Koch and Jorge Lacera

Some magic items inrpire you to keep them for the entire history of your character. It helps when they feature powers that remain relevant at every level. Some magic items are only useful during rare moments in a campaign narrative against specific creatures and obstacles. What to keep and what to convert into residuum are relevant questions that have a lot to do with the theme of your character.

Player's Handbook 2 introduced the primal power source, and it seems only fitting that primal-themed magic items should complement those character classes. To create allure for such items, seeding them into your campaign history gives the players a chance to research what they can potentially find before anybody claims dibs.

The magic items that follow are accompanied by past accounts of their use, organizations that favor them, or tales of heroism and tragedy at the hands of their original owners and wielders. Lore check DCs have also been included for characters who wish to learn about these items. If these primal stories appeal to you as a Dungeon Master or player, use them to seed adventures or character backgrounds as you see fit.

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Pouncing Armor

Pouncing armor was first worn by a tribe of razorclaw shifters who prowled a deadly, humid jungle. The tribe's hunters wore the skins of great cats they had slain to display their hunting prowess. Each razorclaw shifter child who demonstrated the potential to become a great warrior was guided deep into the forests on a hunt. The hunting party would travel at least a week away from any of the tribe's normal lands, and there, the experienced hunters would abandon the would-be warrior. The hunters would leave only an obsidian-tipped spear for the youth. For the young shifter, craving a chance to prove his or her worth to the tribe, this was a cause for great excitement ... and great anxiety. The youth would immediately recognize from the spear that this test was an opportunity to prove his or her worth.

The young shifter would not return to the tribe until he or she had killed large cat or fey panther with the obsidian weapon, skinned creature, and fashioned the hide into armor. The spear itself was also given a minor enchantment by the tribal druids to ensure the kill was genuine—if it was not used in the hunt to kill the living creature fashioned into the armor, the druids would know. No hunter who lied about his or her kill would be allowed to remain with the tribe, and no hunter who failed to kill a cat would dare return alive.

Pouncing Armor Lore

A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

DC 15: Those who wear this armor have the ability to leap great distances toward their opponent from a standing position.

DC 20: Wearers of this armor can bring a hefty melee attack to bear against their enemy while pouncing toward them.

DC 25: This armor is often the product of a solitary rite of passage that places failure or success squarely on the shoulders of the tribal participant.

A character knows the following information with a successful Nature check.

DC 15: *Pouncing armor* is worn by formidable razorclaw shifter hunters and warriors, the adornments of which informally denote rank.

DC 20: This armor can be made from various creatures, including the hides of bears and great cats, the scales of crocodiles and dire scorpions, or the chitin of giant beetles and scorpions.

Pouncing Armor **Level 4+**

The spirit of a predatory animal is bound to this armor, imbuing the wearer with powerful legs.

Lvl 4	+1	840 gp	Lvl 19	+4	105,000 gp
Lvl 9	+2	4,200 gp	Lvl 24	+5	525,000 gp
Lvl 14	+3	21,000 gp	Lvl 29	+6	2,625,000 gp

Armor: Leather, Hide

Enhancement: AC

Power (At-Will): Standard Action. You make a charge attack, but instead of the normal movement granted by a charge, you make an Athletics check to jump as though you had a running start. The distance you jump can exceed your speed.

Power (Daily): Free Action. *Trigger:* You make a charge attack. *Effect:* At the end of the charge, use an at-will attack power instead of a melee basic attack.

Temblor Weapon

Anthur never quite measured up to his hill giant brethren. He tried to hold his own, but barely managed. Unable to compete at rock throwing, wrestling, or the other sports bored hill giants engage in, Anthur often became the target of their insults ... and their boulders.

Instead of growing bitter, Anthur resigned himself to being the runt of his clan and spent an increasing amount of time wandering the impassable crags near his tribe's lands. During one such outing, Anthur disturbed an earth titan. Enraged at the disruption, the titan slammed a massive fist into Anthur, sending

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him tumbling down the mountainside and into an alpine meadow low on the side of the mountain.

Here, Anthur met a tribe of people who looked like him, but who spoke a strange langugage he'd never heard—they were goliaths. They made Anthur welcome in their village, but Anthur yearned to return home and walk the mountains and cliffs of his tribe. One day, he delcared his wish to return home. His new friends, saddened at his departure, gifted him with a sturdy greatclub. Anthur set off, and his path took him directly to the home of the titan who once sent him sailing across the mountain peaks.

Awake this time, the earth titan would not let Anthus pass. Despite being outmatched, he refused to back down and raced past the massive creature. Enraged, The earth titan followed, leaping from crag to cliff. The smaller, nimbler Anthur stayed just ahead of the titan until it landed on a crumbling slope. As the ground shifted beneath it, the titan struggled to maintain its balance. At that moment, Anthur struck the giant with his greatclub, knocking it down the mountain. The titan bounced down the mountain, trailing a growing cascade of falling rock, until a massive avalanche slid down the mountain in its wake. The avalanche buried the titan at the base of the mountain, but to Anthur's regret, also crushed and buried his giant tribe.

Anthur raced down the mountain, where the earth titan struggled vainly to free itself. Miserable at the death of his kin and mother, Anthur descended the slope to finish off the titan, and in so doing, imbued his greatclub with the primordial spirit of the creature. It would be several years before Anthur understood that he had fulfilled a prophecy, defeating the earth titan that stood between his trueborn goliath kin and their original homelands, stolen by the hill giants many years earlier, and from whom he was also abducted.

Temblor Weapon Lore

A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

DC 15: This weapon can make bull rush attacks more potent.

DC 20: When smashed against the ground, this weapon can knock opponents off their feet.

Temblor Weapon **Level 4+**

You send a shockwave of primal energy through the ground that shakes the firmament.

Lvl 4	+1	840 gp	Lvl 19	+4	105,000 gp
Lvl 9	+2	4,200 gp	Lvl 24	+5	525,000 gp
Lvl 14	+3	21,000 gp	Lvl 29	+6	2,625,000 gp

Weapon: Any hammer or mace
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus
Property: Add the proficiency bonus and enhancement bonus of this weapon to your attack roll when making a bull rush.
Power (Daily): Standard Action. Smash this weapon against the ground and make an attack: Close burst 2; Strength + the weapon's enhancement bonus vs. Fortitude; the target is knocked prone.
Level 14 or 19: Burst 3.
Level 24 or 29: Burst 5.

Bracers of Brachiation

The Fallowfoot Brigands are a roaming band of do-gooder bandits that harry empires and kingdoms, targeting the rule of any leader whose greed has attracted their ire or whose excess has caused them to grow fat at the expense of their people. The Fallowfoot Brigands use ambush tactics, attacking from forested positions and then disappearing into the treetop canopy. To stymie would-be pursuers, many of them swing from branch to branch using *bracers of brachiation*, leaving virtually no trail of their passing. To gain the attention of the Fallowfoot Brigands, a ruler must first exploit or neglect his or her population. The members of this organization spread out into the wilderness, construct forest refuges for temporary storage, and then restrict, choke, and finally cut off supply lines to the region. Shares of this wealth are redistributed directly to the people through agents who have infiltrated their communities, but not everything is given back. These actions, however philanthropic on the surface, are wildly profitable, as large portions of stolen raw materials are kept by the Fallowfoot Brigands for resale or self-sustenance. The organization eventually moves on to greater spoils, but not before training the locals and creating a new chapter in the region.

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Bracers of Brachiation Lore

A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

DC 15: These bracers grant the wearer natural climbing aptitude and the ability to swing through the forest.

DC 20: Some who wear these bracers can climb at the same speed that they can move across the ground. The most powerful wearers move even faster through the trees than they do on the ground.

A character knows the following information with a successful Streetwise check.

DC 15: The Fallowfoot Brigands descend out of the trees using these bracers to ambush the supply lines of corrupt empires and kingdoms.

DC 20: Trying to track the Fallowfoot Brigands through the trees is difficult, as they leave no footprints behind.

Bracers of Brachiation **Level 5+**

You seamlessly negotiate through the forest canopy of a wilderness as if on foot.

Lvl 5	1,000 gp	Lvl 25	125,000 gp
Lvl 15	25,000 gp		

Item Slot: Arms

Property: You gain a climb speed equal to half your ground speed, and you can swing through the trees of a forest at your climb speed, during which time you do not leave any tracks.

Level 15: Your climb speed equals your ground speed.

Level 25: Your climb speed equals your ground speed + 4.

Boots of the Dryad

Saedrim watched the man for years as he grew old in his solitude. She remembered when he first arrived after a wind storm and constructed a cottage by hand from only fallen trees. Saedrim had heard of such men, druids or shamans who communed with nature rather than taming it, but had never met one personally.

When she appeared before him for the first time, it was as a beautiful maiden. He was not surprised, as if he had been aware of her for years. Saedrim wanted to share the hidden secrets of the forest with the man, and so crafted him a pair of enchanted boots that allowed him to move through the wilderness as she did. Stepping through the green places that passed into the Feywild, they bathed together in the rejuvenating waters of her sacred glade.

Time passed quickly, until one day the man was discovered by humans dressed in metal. They asked him to return with them to the world he had left behind. He explained that there were duties he needed to resolve, and reluctantly, Saedrim said good-bye. But her curiosity caused her to follow the humans in secret.

The men dressed in metal led the man to a castle where, amid much fanfare, they placed a crown upon his head. Saedrim understood what was happening, and felt proud of the man for being a leader among his people. Then she saw the woman—likewise crowned—sitting to his right. Enraged with jealously, Saedrim encased the man's throne, along with his entire castle, in a cage of sharp briars. Mortally wounded from the thorns that immobilized him, the man's last words revealed that the woman had been his sister, to whom he was abdicating the kingdom. Saedrim dissolved the cage and vanished, never to be seen again.

Boots of the Dryad Lore

A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

DC 15: These boots grant the ability to move seamlessly through obstacles in the forest.

DC 20: .Wearers of these boots gain the ability to teleport within the confines of a forest.

Boots of the Dryad **Level 5+**

Natural growth moves aside as you travel the wilderness, and you can disappear and step out from a nearby tree.

Lvl 5	1,000 gp	Lvl 25	625,000 gp
Lvl 15	25,000 gp		

Item Slot: Feet

Property: You ignore difficult terrain that is the result of plants, trees, underbrush, or natural growth (forest walk).

Power (Daily): Move Action. Teleport 4 squares to a square adjacent to a tree, treant, or plant of your size or larger.

Level 15: Teleport 8 squares.

Level 25: Teleport 12 squares.

Gorilla Gloves

Orcs have a long history of resolving conflicts, not a day of which involves rational discourse. Even in the face of superior forces, orcs would sooner rail against impossible odds than negotiate a compromise short of utterly destroying their enemies. One great orc leader, Kriiat of the Bloodfist tribe, was a powerful sorcerer. He had unparalleled leadership skills, and through sheer intimidation and his powerful magical abilities, managed to bring several other tribes under his banner. He was especially known for hurling his most hated enemies from the top of a massive cliff near his tribe's lands, using a set of magic gloves he made to aid his executions.

The gloves also proved devastating on the front lines. Even the sturdiest dwarf, once hoisted overhead, was powerless against being flung through the air. Enemies both formidable and insignificant were hurled over cliffs, thrown off castle battlements, and tossed into oceans. They were aimed against picket walls, propelled onto reinforcements, or upended into churning lava. Kriiat so loved his creation that he made more pairs for his fiercest warriors, but this turned out to be his undoing, and the salvation of the lands the Bloodfist tribe had invaded. The orc warriors loved the *gorilla gloves*, finding new and creative ways to dispatch their enemies with a flair that was almost artistic. In a battle on a clifftop battlement, one of Kriiat's warriors saw a chance to seize glory by the throat, and heaved his unprepared and unprotected orc warlord off the top of the wall ... only to be slain by archer fire immediately after. The Bloodfist tribe's attacks were broken, and duplicate *gorilla gloves* made in the image of those recovered from Kriiat's followers soon sprung up across the land.

Gorilla Gloves Lore

A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

DC 15: These gloves grant the ability to throw grabbed opponents through the air.

DC 20: Opponents thrown by a wearer of *gorilla gloves* also take damage and land prone.

A character knows the following information with a successful History check.

DC 15: Orc armies enjoyed a time of uncontested superiority when these magic gloves were introduced into their ranks.

DC 20: The orcs who were outfitted with these magic gloves were hulking warriors who survived several battles on the front lines.

DC 25: The magic gloves were created by an orc sorcerer and warlord. He was eventually murdered by one of his own lieutenants, who threw the warlord off a castle wall using a pair of the gloves given him by his leader.

Gorilla Gloves **Level 6+**

You possess the might to hoist opponents above your head and hurl them out of your way.

Lvl 6 1,800 gp Lvl 26 1,125,000 gp
Lvl 16 45,000 gp

Item Slot: Hands

Power (Daily): Standard Action. Strength + 2 vs. Fortitude; targets a creature grabbed by you; you throw the target, pushing it 3 squares. The target then takes 2d10 damage and falls prone.

Level 16: Strength + 4 vs. Fortitude; 5 squares; 3d10 damage.
Level 26: Strength + 6 vs. Fortitude; 7 squares; 5d10 damage.

Boar Tusk Helm

Nomadic bands of longtooth shifters once roamed the forests and plains now settled by civilized races. More hunter than gatherer, resources were always in demand by these bands, but especially during winter when the most abundant regions were highly contested. Bands of shifters would lead raids against each other, but the most fearsome tribe called themselves the Keepers of

the Boar. Their leader, a shifter named Gnarl, wore the first *boar tusk helm*. He recognized that competition for resources was too great to sustain all the nomadic bands, but also that fighting each other was pointless. It always wasted more resources than it gained. As such, Gnarl sued for peace with the only tribe that came close to the strength of his own, and with their allied might, conquered the remaining nomadic bands.

Gnarl's work resulted in the first shifter nation, small thought it was, but his work did not end there. The shifters conducted border raids against the more civilized races and rapidly expanded their territories. Gnarl granted meaningful friendship to those who surrendered and viciously slaughtered anybody who did not. He was brutal with traitors, especially those who sought to betray their own people to him. For a brief period of time, Gnarl ruled over a sizable territory that was held together more by the force of his personality than any sustainable legacy.

Successive generations squandered the wealth Gnarl amassed while the civilized races he once ruled slowly grew more powerful. The *boar tusk helm* is still worn by descendants of that original tribe.

Boar Tusk Helm Lore

A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

DC 15: This helm grants proficiency with an unarmed gore attack that can be treated as normal melee weapon.

DC 20: The gore attack is enchanted with a bonus to attack and damage that increases with the tier of this helm.

DC 25: If activated after a charge attack, the user of this helm deals extra damage based on their Strength, pushes their target, and knocks their opponent prone.

A character knows the following information with a successful Nature check.

DC 15: The tribe known as Keeper of the Boar still exists today and remains the most organized society of longtooth shifters to date.

DC 20: Direct descendants of Gnarl have been traced to current generations and are groomed for leadership.

Boar Tusk Helm **Level 7+**

Your enemies are but standing obstacles through which you can rush.

Lvl 7 2,600 gp Lvl 27 1,625,000 gp
Lvl 17 65,000 gp

Item Slot: Head

Property: Gain a gore attack while wearing this helmet: an unarmed weapon with +2 proficiency bonus to attack rolls and deals 1d10 damage. The wearer gains proficiency with this weapon. The gore attack has a +2 enhancement bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls. This attack counts as a melee basic attack.
Level 17: +4 enhancement bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls.
Level 27: +6 enhancement bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls.

Power (Daily): Free action. *Trigger:* You hit with a weapon at the end of a charge. *Effect:* The target takes extra damage equal to your Strength modifier, and you push the target 1 square and knock it prone.
Level 17: Extra damage equal to twice your Strength modifier, and you push the target 3 squares.
Level 27: Extra damage equal to three times your Strength modifier, and you push the target 5 squares.

Ring of Giants

Despite his puny stature, the hill giants were fond of their diminutive brother, Anthur. To their way of thinking, the fact that he was small meant that they had to be tougher on the little runt. Pulling their punches did him no favors, especially if he hoped to survive when food was scarce. Treating their brethren as a moving target during rock throwing was actually a form of tough love, for which he would thank them one day. Indeed, what the hill giants liked best about the runt was that he never complained, but simply learned how to climb the mountain faster. Nothing

irritates a hill giant more then a tribe member who protests too loudly.

The clan shaman questioned the wisdom of letting such a small hill giant live, sensing something ominous about the boy. After losing her previous son a year earlier to the elements, the runt's adoptive mother, who would never disclose where the child had come from, refused to allow any harm to befall this child. In truth, she had stolen the infant from a family of goliaths who camped near the base of the mountain and then lied about giving birth to the boy. Knowing that the boy would face many hardships growing up among hill giants, she carved a ring from the bones of her previous child and prayed to Kord for a blessing of strength. The storm god listened and enchanted the ring. It would give the wearer the ability to strike as hard as a hill giant when wielding a weapon in the ring hand. The hill giant mother could not have known this at the time, but in raising the goliath, she secured the doom of not only herself, but also her clan.

Ring of Giants Lore

A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

DC 15: Wearing this ring grants a bonus to all feats of physical strength.

DC 20: This ring grants the wearer the ability to deal damage with a weapon as if wielded by a much larger creature.

DC 25: The more adventurous the wearer, the more potent their attacks become.

Ring of Giants **Level 13**

Your limbs are infused with the strength of a creature much larger than yourself.

Item Slot: Ring 17,000 gp

Property: Gain a +2 bonus to critical hit damage per enhancement bonus of the weapon you wield.

Power (Daily): Free Action. Use this power when you hit with a primal attack power. In addition to the power's normal effect, you also push the target 2 squares and knock it prone.

SOULFANGS

Soulfangs represent the stored magic of an ancient culture that considered strength of will and strength of body the twin pillars of honor, and honor to be the sole consideration in determining a person's worth. In place of a liquid that any person could imbibe to benefit from its effect, this lost culture infused their magic in sharp fangs taken from monstrous beasts. To release their power, the fang must pierce the user's flesh, an act that requires the will to accept pain. Then, to continue benefiting from the soulfang's magic, one must have the endurance to survive the pain that comes with its magic.

Soulfang Lore

A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

DC 15: Soulfangs are an ancient form of magic, in which enchantments are kept in animal teeth that are jabbed into the user's flesh to release their magic.

DC 20: The magic of a soulfang is volatile and a test of endurance and will. As long as the soulfang remains in your flesh granting its power, the body also takes harm from the rigors of the magic.

Soulfangs

A soulfang is an enchanted claw, talon, tooth, or sharpened bone that produces its effects when stabbed into the user. You can use a soulfang on yourself as a minor action or on an ally as a standard action. Drawing a soulfang out of your pack is a minor action.

Soulfangs offer various advantages in combat, but with a concurrent penalty of constant damage. Both last until the character using the item removes the soulfang from his flesh as a free action on your turn. A soulfang can be removed from an unconscious ally as a minor action. If not removed, a soulfang's effect ends at the end of the encounter.

Roused Spirit Soulfang — Level 2+

Your spirit's claws grow long and drip phantom blood.

Lvl 2	25 gp	Lvl 17	2,600 gp
Lvl 7	100 gp	Lvl 22	13,000 gp
Lvl 12	500 gp	Lvl 27	65,000 gp

Soulfang

Power (Consumable): Minor Action. Until you remove this soulfang, you gain a +2 power bonus to attack rolls and a +2 power bonus to damage rolls with *spirit's shield* or *spirit's fangs* and you take damage equal to half your healing surge value at the start of your turn or if you remove the soulfang on the turn you use it. Damage caused by this soulfang cannot be reduced by any means.

Level 7: +3 power bonus to damage rolls.
Level 12: +4 power bonus to damage rolls.
Level 17: +6 power bonus to damage rolls.
Level 22: +7 power bonus to damage rolls.
Level 27: +8 power bonus to damage rolls.

Giving Spirit Soulfang — Level 3+

A nimbus of white energy around this fang pulses in time with your heartbeat, channeling your life energy into your healing powers.

Lvl 3	30 gp	Lvl 18	3,400 gp
Lvl 8	125 gp	Lvl 23	17,000 gp
Lvl 13	650 gp	Lvl 28	85,000 gp

Soulfang

Power (Consumable): Minor Action. Until you remove this soulfang, when one of your primal healing powers allows an ally to regain hit points, that ally regains an additional 2 hit points, and you take damage equal to half your healing surge value at the start of your turn or if you remove the soulfang on the turn you use it. Damage caused by this soulfang cannot be reduced by any means.

Level 8: 3 hit points.
Level 13: 4 hit points.
Level 18: 6 hit points.
Level 23: 7 hit points.
Level 28: 8 hit points.

Ironskin Soulfang — Level 5+

Once you stab this fang into your flesh, your skin turns gray and iron hard.

Lvl 5	50 gp	Lvl 20	5,000 gp
Lvl 10	200 gp	Lvl 25	25,000 gp
Lvl 15	1,000 gp	Lvl 30	125,000 gp

Soulfang

Power (Consumable): Minor Action. Until you remove this soulfang, you gain resist 3 to all damage, and you take damage equal to half your healing surge value at the start of your turn or if you remove the soulfang on the turn you use it. Damage caused by this soulfang cannot be reduced by any means.

Level 10: Resist 5 to all damage.
Level 15: Resist 7 to all damage.
Level 20: Resist 10 to all damage.
Level 25: Resist 12 to all damage.
Level 30: Resist 15 to all damage.

Soulfang of Predatory Nature — Level 3+

This claw makes yours sharper.

Lvl 3	30 gp	Lvl 18	3,400 gp
Lvl 8	125 gp	Lvl 23	17,000 gp
Lvl 13	650 gp	Lvl 28	85,000 gp

Soulfang

Power (Consumable): Minor Action. Until you remove this soulfang, you gain a +1 power bonus to damage rolls with beast form powers, and you take damage equal to half your healing surge value at the start of your turn or if you remove the soulfang on the turn you use it. Damage caused by this soulfang cannot be reduced by any means.

Level 8: +2 power bonus.
Level 13: +3 power bonus.
Level 18: +4 power bonus.
Level 23: +5 power bonus.
Level 28: +6 power bonus.

Soulfang of Rage — Level 10

While this fang bites at your flesh, you rage without end.

Soulfang 200 gp

Power (Consumable): Minor Action. Until you remove this soulfang, you are considered to be raging, and you take damage equal to half your healing surge value at the start of your turn. Damage caused by this soulfang cannot be reduced by any means.

Soulfang of Resistance — Level 5+

Energy crackles around you once you use this, absorbing some that would damage you.

Lvl 5	50 gp	Lvl 25	25,000 gp
Lvl 15	1,000 gp		

Soulfang

Power (Consumable): Minor Action. Until you remove this soulfang, you gain resist 10 to a damage of a specific type, and you take damage equal to half your healing surge value at the start of your turn or if you remove the soulfang on the turn you use it. Damage caused by this soulfang cannot be reduced by any means. The damage type (acid, cold, fire, lightning, necrotic, poison, psychic, or thunder) is determined when the soulfang is created.

Level 15: Resist 20.
Level 25: Resist 30.

Soulfang of Retribution — Level 5+

Dark energy lashes from this fang at any creature that dares harm you.

Lvl 5	50 gp	Lvl 20	5,000 gp
Lvl 10	200 gp	Lvl 25	25,000 gp
Lvl 15	1,000 gp	Lvl 30	125,000 gp

Soulfang

Power (Consumable): Minor Action. Until you remove this soulfang, each enemy that hits you with an attack takes 4 necrotic damage, and you take damage equal to half your healing surge value at the start of your turn or if you remove the soulfang on the turn you use it. Damage caused by this soulfang cannot be reduced by any means.

Level 10: 6 necrotic damage.
Level 15: 8 necrotic damage.
Level 20: 10 necrotic damage.
Level 25: 12 necrotic damage.
Level 30: 14 necrotic damage.

Stormlash Soulfang — Level 5+

This fang sends lightning dancing up your arm into your weapon.

Lvl 5	50 gp	Lvl 20	5,000 gp
Lvl 10	200 gp	Lvl 25	25,000 gp
Lvl 15	1,000 gp	Lvl 30	125,000 gp

Soulfang

Power (Consumable): Minor Action. Until you remove this soulfang, you deal 1 extra lightning damage with each weapon attack you make, and you take damage equal to half your healing surge value at the start of your turn or if you remove the soulfang on the turn you use it. Damage caused by this soulfang cannot be reduced by any means.

Level 10: 2 extra lightning damage.
Level 15: 3 extra lightning damage.
Level 20: 4 extra lightning damage.
Level 25: 5 extra lightning damage.
Level 30: 6 extra lightning damage.

Swift Shaper's Soulfang — Level 16

You tap into your primal soul and you become more naturally adept at shifting into your beast forms.

Soulfang 1,800 gp

Power (Consumable): Minor Action. Until you remove this soulfang, you can use your *wild shape* class feature as a free action on your turn, and you take damage equal to half your healing surge value at the start of your turn or if you remove the soulfang on the turn you use it. Damage caused by this soulfang cannot be reduced by any means.

Thorn Grasp Soulfang — Level 3+

The spectral vines you command grow sharp thorns as they entangle your foes.

Lvl 3	30 gp	Lvl 18	3,400 gp
Lvl 8	125 gp	Lvl 23	17,000 gp
Lvl 13	650 gp	Lvl 28	85,000 gp

Soulfang

Power (Consumable): Minor Action. Until you remove this soulfang, when you slide a creature with *warden's grasp*, that creature also takes 5 damage, and you take damage equal to half your healing surge value at the start of your turn or if you remove the soulfang on the turn you use it. Damage caused by this soulfang cannot be reduced by any means.

Level 8: 8 damage.
Level 13: 11 damage.
Level 18: 14 damage.
Level 23: 17 damage.
Level 28: 20 damage.

Soulfang of the Cheetah — Level 10+

This cheetah's fang causes your legs to shift and warp into a form that lets you run faster.

Lvl 10	200 gp	Lvl 30	125,000 gp
Lvl 20	5,000 gp		

Soulfang

Power (Consumable): Minor Action. Until you remove this soulfang, you gain a +2 power bonus to speed, and you take damage equal to half your healing surge value at the start of your turn or if you remove the soulfang on the turn you use it. Damage caused by this soulfang cannot be reduced by any means.

Level 20: +3 power bonus.
Level 30: +4 power bonus.

About the Author

Kolja Raven Liquette divides his professional time among writing for books, for the D&D® game, and for film. Although Kolja has been known to perform on occasion, this happens more by accident than design.

Channel Divinity: Bahamut's Champions

By Robert J. Schwalb

Illustrations by Matt Stawick, Kiriko Moth, and Colin Throm & Tim Hiddets, Empty Room Studio,

There are many bright lights in the Astral Sea, but Bahamut's arguably shines the brightest. At least, his followers are quick to make that claim. Embodying valor, justice, and honor, mortals across the planes look to the Platinum Dragon to intercede wherever wrongs go uncorrected, where tyranny crushes all hope, and where evil devours good. Bahamut's mortal servants embody his principles, upholding their sacred oaths to confront the darkness that looms to all sides. They protect those who cannot protect themselves. They ensure the rule of law, bringing order to those lands given over to chaos. They are honorable warriors, holy champions committed to all Bahamut represents and more.

As influential and as beloved as Bahamut may be, he is but one of many gods. Prayers reach him as they do his peers, but he does not take a direct hand in mortal affairs. His influence extends only so far as mortals who pledge their lives to his cause can reach. Bahamut depends on his chosen few, those bold souls who rise above the lay clergy and truly commit themselves to his holy purpose.

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This article builds on the foundation first established in the *Player's Handbook* and *Divine Power,* offering advice and new rules for player characters who choose Bahamut as a divine patron. A character who serves the Platinum Dragon joins a large family of like-minded heroes, adventurers who see injustices in the world and work to correct them. While there might not be an overarching organization binding the various groups devoted to the Platinum Dragon, those who fight on Bahamut's behalf share the responsibility of bringing light to a world plunged in darkness.

Serving the Platinum Dragon

Mortals do not choose to serve the Platinum Dragon; they are called. Wherever injustices hold sway, Bahamut identifies worthy champions and summons them to fight in his name. Such revelations are subtle, working in concert with the candidate's own moral outlook. Bahamut cultivates the repugnance felt in evil's face and tugs at the conscience when the guilty go unpunished. Those chosen might come to the Platinum Dragon on their own volition, but the god's touch impels the character to take a stand and become more than he or she once was.

Backgrounds

Before you heard Bahamut's call and sought wisdom in his service, you had a life and home, a place in the world you left behind to become an adventurer. The following backgrounds supplement those found in the *Player's Handbook 2* and *Divine Power.* You can choose them when selecting background elements.

After choosing all background elements, you can (with your DM's consent) select one of the following background benefits.

- ✦ Gain a +2 bonus to checks with a skill associated with your background.
- ✦ Add a skill associated with your background to your class's skills list before you choose your trained skills.
- ✦ Choose one language connected to your background. You can speak, read, and write that language fluently.
- ✦ If you are using a campaign setting that offers regional benefits (such as the Forgotten Realms® setting), gain a regional benefit.

Barrister

You worked within the legal system to uphold the law. Did you champion the innocent or punish wrongdoers? Was the legal system just or riddled with corruption? Did you ever defend someone who was guilty or prosecute the innocent? Did you leave your occupation with confidence in the laws you upheld or in disgust?

Associated Skills: Diplomacy, Intimidate

Captive

You spent many years in a dragon's captivity. Was the dragon noble and virtuous or cruel and tyrannical? How did your time with the dragon shape your views about the world? How did you learn about Bahamut during your captivity? How did you survive? How did your captivity end? Did you escape or did the dragon release you?

Associated Skills: Insight, Stealth
Associated Language: Draconic

Rebel

You fought against a corrupt regime to end its tyrannical ways. Were you part of a larger organization or go it on your own? How were you recruited? What did you do against the community's leaders? Was the corrupt regime truly corrupt? Did you ever do anything you now regret?

Associated Skills: Endurance, Thievery

Redemption

You spent your life as a slave to darkness. What sort of wicked deeds did you perform? What was the moment of revelation, the event that opened your eyes to your own darkness? What penance have you paid? What penance must you still pay?

Associated Skills: Arcana, Bluff

Squire

You studied under a famous knight, serving the warrior until you mastered the talents she taught. What kind of person was this knight? What was the most important lesson you learned? Is your mentor still alive? How long was it since you last saw the knight? Did your association end on good terms?

Associated Skills: Athletics, Nature

Survivor

You survived a terrible calamity that forever changed your course. Were you the only survivor? Were you attacked or the victim of some natural disaster? If you were attacked, who attacked you and why? Do you seek revenge or have you made peace with your losses? How will this event shape your future?

Associated Skills: Endurance, Stealth

Witness

You witnessed a terrible evil, an act so profane you feel as though you will never be clean again. What was this act? What were the circumstances? Did you participate? Did it befall a loved one or friend?

Associated Skills: Insight, Perception

Initiation

The call decided your fate, and once heard, you knew your purpose, realized your destiny. The call showed you the way, but it left the how for you to decide. In thinking about your divine character and your initial training, consider any of the following possibilities.

Acolyte

Temples and religious institutions offer extensive training for divine characters. Such adventurers might have spent their formative years as acolytes, beginning as scullions and servants when not studying sacred scrolls or learning the basic prayers to channel their god's power. Acolytes have extensive experience in their faith, and divine service is something to which they are accustomed. Any character with a divine class may have served as acolytes for a time, but avengers, clerics, and paladins are most common.

Common Cause

Not all who serve Bahamut in the world undergo religious training. Many servants do so without drawing power from the god and instead serve through other means, through martial prowess, arcane mastery, psionic discipline, and so on. Some champions might dabble in divine study, adding prayers to their

arsenals, while others may find their paths intersecting with Bahamut's for a brief moment, their interests being one and the same for a limited time. Characters who find a common interest in the teachings of Bahamut, but who might not have chosen a strictly divine path, often come to serve in this way.

Revelation

Last are those who discover Bahamut through happenstance. Reviewing a dusty tome, translating ancient runes decorating a ruined temple's wall, or some other discovery can draw new servants to the Platinum Dragon. These heroes tend to regard their god as a means to an end, a fount from which they can draw their power to transform the world in a measurable way. Invokers and paladins commonly come to serve through this process.

Beliefs and Duties

Those who follow Bahamut cleave to four virtues: Honor, Justice, Righteousness, and Nobility. All of the Platinum Dragon's servants embrace these qualities, letting them act as guides when confronted with moral quandaries. By acting as living examples of these virtues, divine champions can also inspire the same qualities in others and further their divine patron's presence in the world.

Honor: Acting with honor means living without shame. Strive in all things to be worthy of respect and admiration, and do nothing to sully your reputation or faith. Treat others with fairness, consider the needs of others before your own, and ever strive to emulate the Platinum Dragon in all that you do.

Justice: Without justice, there can be no order, and without order, there can be no good. You should always work to protect the weak and the innocent. Tolerate no crime and seek swift justice for the wrongdoer.

Righteousness: As Bahamut's holy servant, all that you do reflects on your faith. Live an unimpeachable life, seeking the good and wholesome. Reject temptations and their corrupting influence. Be the moral beacon in all that you do.

Nobility: Act with dignity. Avoid the base emotions for they cloud judgment and lead to darkness. Be tempered, even, and resolute in your actions and you will find success.

Character Options

In addition to the normal options available to all divine characters, the following paragon path, new feats, and epic destiny are all specifically designed for Bahamut's chosen few.

Chromatic Bane

"Gold, red, puce, doesn't matter one copper to me. All I care about is whether or not you serve the Chromatic Dragon. This is one thing I just can't stand."

Prerequisite: Any divine class

The titanic struggle between Bahamut and Tiamat is legendary. Throughout history, the two gods have clashed, their armies mustering and throwing themselves against each other repeatedly as the two powers struggle for dominance. No matter the other interests guiding them or their involvement in the natural world, their longstanding animosity inevitably comes to the fore. Many champions fighting for the Platinum Dragon identify this endless conflict and come to see Tiamat as evil's author in the world. Those who do might take the battle to Tiamat's followers, committing themselves to rooting out and destroying her dragons and other servants.

As a Chromatic Bane, you devote your training and purpose to the destruction of evil dragons. Metallic or chromatic, planar or otherwise, if the dragon is sworn to the Lady of Avarice, it becomes your sworn enemy. You hone your fighting techniques to withstand draconic fury and develop ways to lend aid to comrades who fight at your side. When you master your style, you become Tiamat's bane, a relentless adversary opposing her designs on every front.

Chromatic Bane Path Features

Resilient Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to make an extra attack, you also gain resist 10 to one of the following damage types until the end of the encounter: acid, cold, fire, lightning, or poison. At 21st level, the resistance increases to 15.

Inspired Bravery (11th level): When you end your turn, one ally who can see you can make a saving throw against a charm effect or a fear effect.

Platinum Mantle (16th level): You gain the Channel Divinity power *platinum mantle*.

Channel Divinity: Platinum Mantle
Chromatic Bane Feature

Destructive power washes around you, but Bahamut protects you and those who trust you.

Encounter ✦ Divine
Immediate Interrupt **Close** burst 3
Trigger: You are hit by a close or area attack
Target: You and each ally in the burst
Effect: The target gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn.

Chromatic Bane Prayers

Rolling Stab **Chromatic Bane Attack 11**

As your foe strikes you, you roll to the side to make a punishing counterstrike.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Weapon
Immediate Reaction **Melee** weapon
Trigger: An enemy hits you with a melee attack
Target: The triggering enemy
Effect: Before your attack, shift 5 squares to any square adjacent to the target.
Attack: Strength, Wisdom, or Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Strength, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier damage, and you gain a +2 bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn. If the target is a dragon, this attack deals an extra 1[W] damage.

Rousing Cry Chromatic Bane Utility 12

You voice is a clarion, cutting through the confusion to stir your ally to action.

Daily ✦ Divine
Minor Action **Close** burst 10
Target: One dazed or stunned ally in the burst that you can see
Effect: The dazed or stunned condition ends and the target can take a move action as a free action.

Heartstrike Chromatic Bane Attack 20

Your foe recoils from your attack in agony, but your pursuit of justice brings you implacably after it.

Daily ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength, Wisdom, or Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 4[W] + Strength, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier damage, you slide the target 3 squares and shift 3 squares to a square adjacent to the target, and the target is marked until the end of the encounter.
Miss: Half damage and the target is marked until the end of the encounter.
Special: When charging, you can use this power in place of a melee basic attack.

Heroic Tier Feats

Any character of any level who meets the prerequisites can select the following feats.

Advantageous Rebuke

Prerequisite: Invoker, Covenant of Preservation

Benefit: When you hit with an attack with a bonus to the attack roll granted from *preserver's rebuke*, the target also grants combat advantage until the end of your next turn.

HEROIC TIER FEATS

Name	Prerequisites	Benefit
Advantageous Rebuke	Invoker, Covenant of Preservation	Hit benefitting from *preserver's rebuke* causes target to grant combat advantage
Emboldening Critical	Avenger, Censure of Unity, *oath of enmity*	Allies adjacent to oath target gain +2 damage against it when you score a critical hit
Mettle Proven	Paladin, *divine mettle*	*Divine mettle* target can spend healing surge with successful save
Radiant Breath	Dragonborn, any divine class	Add radiant damage type to *dragon breath*
Shielding Word	Cleric, *healing word*	*Healing word* target gains +2 defenses until start of your next turn

PARAGON TIER FEATS

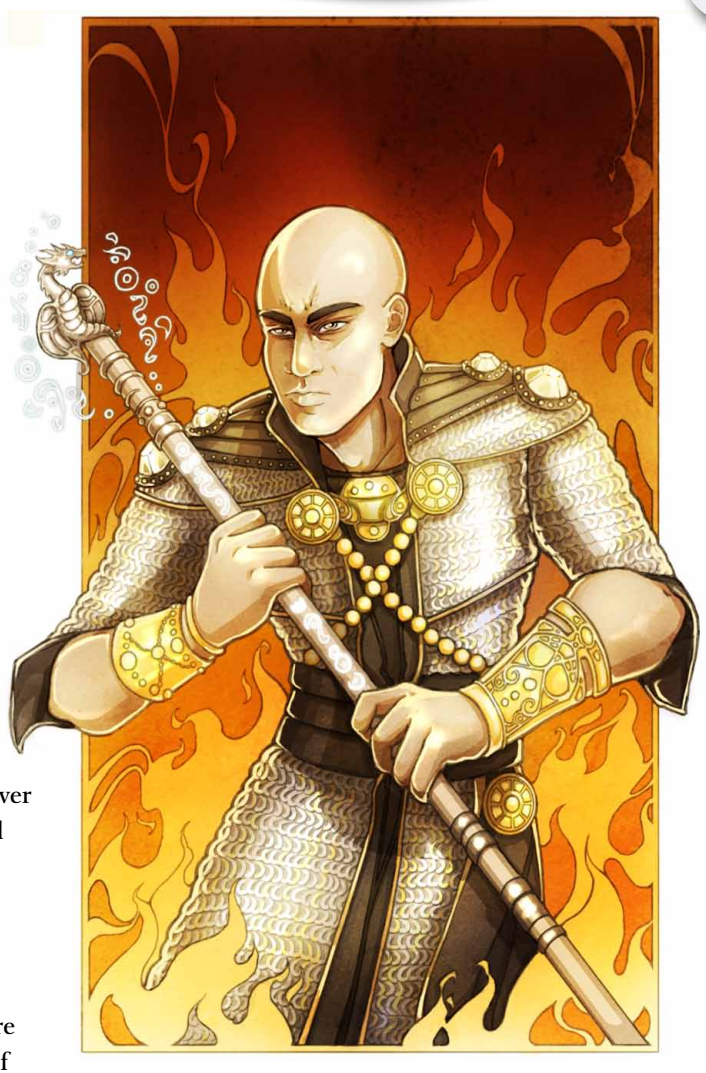
Name	Prerequisites	Benefit
Broadened Manifestation	11th level, invoker, Covenant of Preservation	Slide one or two allies with covenant manifestation
Dragonbane	11th level, any divine class	Powers that target undead also target dragons
Forceful Challenge	11th level, paladin, ***divine challenge***	Slide target when it takes damage from ***divine challenge***
Inspiring Oath	11th level, avenger, Censure of Unity	One ally shifts when you use ***oath of enmity***
Merciful Retreat	11th level, cleric, ***healer's mercy***	***Healer's mercy*** targets shift 1

EPIC TIER FEATS

Name	Prerequisites	Benefit
Superior Preservation	21st level, invoker, Covenant of Preservation	Ally you slide with covenant manifestation gains temporary hit points
Weakening Challenge	21st level, paladin, ***divine challenge***	Weaken target when it takes damage from ***divine challenge***

MULTICLASS FEATS

Name	Prerequisites	Benefit
Dragon's Rebuke	4th level, Platinum Revelation	Swap 3rd-level encounter attack power for *dragon's rebuke*
Hand of Justice	4th level, Noble Indoctrination	Swap 3rd-level encounter attack power for *hand of justice*
Noble Indoctrination	Wis 13, must worship Bahamut	Training in Religion; gain *righteous judgment*
Platinum Revelation	Str 13, must worship Bahamut	Training in Insight; gain *Bahamut's shield* power
Righteous Intolerance	10th level, Platinum Revelation	Swap 9th-level daily attack power for *righteous ntolerance*
Righteous Savior	8th level, Noble Indoctrination	Swap 6th-level utility power for *righteous savior*
Shining Purpose	10th level, Noble Indoctrination	Swap 9th-level daily attack power for *shining purpose*
Zealous Fury	8th level, Platinum Revelation	Swap 6th-level utility power for *zealous fury*



Emboldening Critical

Prerequisite: Avenger, Censure of Unity, *oath of enmity*

Benefit: Whenever you score a critical hit against your *oath of enmity* target, all allies adjacent to the target gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls against the target until the start of your next turn.

Mettle Proven

Prerequisite: Paladin, *divine mettle*

Benefit: When an ally succeeds on a saving throw granted by your use of *divine mettle*, the ally can spend a healing surge.

Radiant Breath

Prerequisite: Dragonborn, any divine class

Benefit: Add the radiant damage type to whatever damage type you chose for your *dragon breath* racial power. This power also gains the radiant keyword.

Shielding Word

Prerequisite: Cleric, *healing word*

Benefit: Targets of your *healing word* class feature also gain a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of your next turn.

Paragon Tier Feats

Characters of 11th level or higher who meets the prerequisites can select the following feats.

Broadened Manifestation

Prerequisite: 11th level, invoker, Covenant of Preservation

Benefit: You can slide one or two allies with your covenant manifestation.

Dragonbane

Prerequisite: 11th level, any divine class

Benefit: When you use a divine power that normally targets undead, you can also target dragons.

Forceful Challenge

Prerequisite: 11th level, paladin, *divine challenge*

Benefit: When a creature takes damage from your *divine challenge* or divine sanction, you can slide that creature 1 square after the triggering attack is resolved.

Inspiring Oath

Prerequisite: 11th level, avenger, *oath of enmity*

Benefit: When you use *oath of enmity*, one ally you can see can shift 2 squares closer to your target as a free action.

Merciful Shift

Prerequisite: 11th level, cleric, *healer's mercy*

Benefit: Each target of your *healer's mercy* power can shift 1 square as a free action.

Epic Tier Feats

Characters of 21st level or higher who meets the prerequisites can select the following feats.

Superior Preservation

Prerequisite: 21st level, invoker, Covenant of Preservation

Benefit: When you use your covenant manifestation, one ally you slide gains temporary hit points equal to your Intelligence modifier.

Weakening Challenge

Prerequisite: 21st level, paladin, *divine challenge*

Benefit: Whenever a target takes damage from your *divine challenge* or divine sanction, it is also weakened on the triggering attack.

Multiclass Feats

In Bahamut's ongoing struggle against Tiamat and other forces of evil, the Platinum Dragon seeks out worthy mortals to carry his banners into battle. The following multiclass feats allow characters from any class to benefit from the shining god's favor and do his work in the world. Although Noble Indoctrination and Platinum Revelation are not true classes, each is considered to be a class-specific multiclass feat granting access to specialized powers for those who vow service to Bahamut.

Where a feat power includes a "swap" entry, you can replace the feat with a higher-level benefit whenever you would replace the power for a higher-level power. When you do, you gain the higher-level benefit as indicated by the swap entry.

Dragon's Rebuke [Multiclass]

Prerequisite: 4th level, Platinum Revelation

Benefit: You can swap one 3rd-level or higher encounter attack power you know for the *dragon's rebuke* attack power.

Dragon's Rebuke — **Feat Power**

Your strike awakens the dragon within you, giving you the drive to punish you foe should it fail to give your god his proper due.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Your highest ability vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + your highest ability modifier damage. If the target makes an attack that does not include you as a target before the start of your next turn, you can push the target 2 squares as an immediate reaction.
Level 13 Swap: **Hit:** 3[W] + your highest ability modifier damage.
Level 23 Swap: **Hit:** 4[W] + your highest ability modifier damage.

Hand of Justice [Multiclass]

Prerequisite: 4th level, Noble Indoctrination

Benefit: You can swap one 3rd-level or higher encounter attack power you know for the *hand of justice* attack power.

Hand of Justice — **Feat Power**

A radiant draconic claw appears and punishes your enemy for attacking a friend.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement
Immediate Reaction **Ranged** 10
Trigger: An enemy within range that you can see hits an ally with an attack
Target: The triggering enemy
Attack: Your highest ability vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d12 + your highest ability modifier damage, and the ally the triggering attack hit can spend a healing surge.
Level 13 Swap: 2d12 + your highest ability modifier damage.
Level 23 Swap: 3d12 + your highest ability modifier damage.

Noble Indoctrination [Multiclass Bahamut]

Prerequisite: Wis 13, you must worship Bahamut

Benefit: You gain training in Religion.

You gain the *righteous judgment* power. You can use any implement you can normally use as an implement for the powers from this multiclass feat and those that list it as a prerequisite. You can also use any weapon you are proficient with as an implement for these powers, but the weapon's proficiency bonus doesn't apply.

Righteous Judgment — Feat Power

You whisper a bitter prayer, condemning your enemy to Bahamut's judgment.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Target: One creature
Attack: Your highest ability vs. Will
Hit: If the target moves before the end of your next turn, one ally within 5 squares of you may shift as an immediate reaction. If the target makes an attack before the end of your next turn, one ally within 5 squares of you gains a +2 power bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls against the target until the end of your next turn.

Platinum Revelation [Multiclass Bahamut]

Prerequisite: Str 13, you must worship Bahamut

Benefit: You gain training in Insight.

You gain the *Bahamut's shield* power.

Bahamut's Shield — Feat Power

You invoke the Platinum Dragon to shield yourself and others from harm.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Your highest ability vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + your highest ability modifier damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to its next attack roll before the end of your next turn.

Righteous Intolerance [Multiclass]

Prerequisite: 10th level, Platinum Revelation

Benefit: You can swap one 9th-level or higher daily attack power you know for the *righteous intolerance* attack power.

Righteous Intolerance — Feat Power

Filled with righteous fury, you unleash divine wrath to penetrate your opponent's defenses.

Daily ✦ Divine, Radiant, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Your highest ability vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + your highest ability modifier radiant damage.
Effect: The enemy radiates Bahamut's righteous fury (save ends). While the target radiates righteous fury, when an ally within 3 squares of the target takes damage from an attack, that ally gains temporary hit points equal to your highest ability modifier and you can shift up to your speed to a square adjacent to that ally.
Aftereffect: The target is dazed until the end of your next turn.
Level 19 Swap: **Hit:** 4[W] + your highest ability modifier radiant damage.
Level 29 Swap: **Hit:** 6[W] + your highest ability modifier damage.

Righteous Savior [Multiclass]

Prerequisite: 8th level, Noble Indoctrination

Benefit: You can swap one 6th-level or higher utility power you know for the *righteous savior* utility power.

Righteous Savior — Feat Power

You rush to your endangered ally's side to lend aid where it's most needed.

Encounter ✦ Divine
Immediate Interrupt **Ranged** 5
Trigger: An ally in range is hit by an attack
Target: The triggering ally
Effect: Shift up to 5 squares to a square adjacent to the target. The target gains a +3 bonus to all defenses until the start of your next turn.

Shining Purpose [Multiclass]

Prerequisite: 10th level, Noble Indoctrination

Benefit: You can swap one 9th-level or higher daily attack power you know for the *shining purpose* attack power.

Shining Purpose — Feat Power

As you shrug off your injuries, your vision reveals a path to certain victory.

Daily ✦ Divine, Healing, Radiant
Free Action **Close** burst 3
Trigger: You hit an enemy
Target: One ally you can see in burst
Effect: The target can spend a healing surge and then make a basic attack against the triggering enemy with a +2 power bonus on the attack roll as a free action. If the attack hits, it deals an extra 1d10 radiant damage.
Level 19 Swap: **Effect:** Extra 2d10 radiant damage.
Level 29 Swap: **Effect:** Extra 3d10 radiant damage.

Zealous Fury [Multiclass]

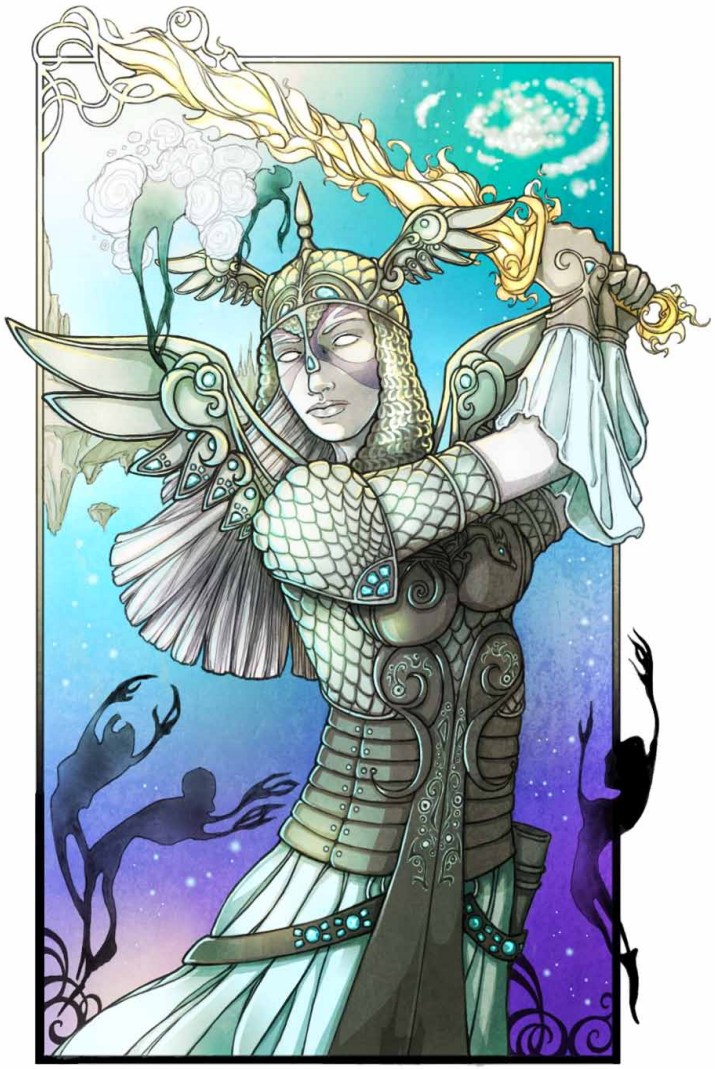
Prerequisite: 8th level, Platinum Revelation

Benefit: You can swap one 6th-level or higher utility power you know for the *zealous fury* utility power.

Zealous Fury — Feat Power

When an enemy dishonors you by attacking an ally, you intercede to ensure your enemy does not make the same mistake twice.

Daily ✦ Divine, Healing
Immediate Reaction **Ranged** 10
Trigger: An ally within range is hit by an attack
Effect: The ally regains hit points as if it spent a healing surge, and you can teleport 10 squares to a square adjacent to the enemy that attacked the ally and mark that enemy (save ends).



Bahamut's Vessel

Your great virtue and righteous nature reward you with the sacred task of safeguarding Bahamut's divinity.

Prerequisite: 21st level, must worship Bahamut

Having long championed Bahamut in the world, taking up his causes and making them your own, you garner the god's attention. Seeing in you a reflection of his own noble character, he bestows on you a portion of his divine essence, both to make you a more effective servant and to protect a portion of his divinity against some future calamity. Great power accompanies this grave responsibility, power you can use to resemble your patron and access his own divine qualities.

The holy burden in no way restricts your personal objectives and you are free to pursue your own ends, though your goals likely coincide with those of the Platinum Dragon. You must have special care, however, for the fate of a god—and perhaps more—rests within your imperfect shell. From time to time, Bahamut might call upon you for a special task, to go places where he is unable, and act on his behalf, giving you a look into a possible future where you might serve as his exarch.

Immortality?

The divine fragment you carry enables Bahamut to be reborn into the world, to live even if his divine form is slain, as unlikely an event as that might be. If your patron never faces destruction, good and constant service undoubtedly rewards you with a place in your god's dominion, perhaps as an exarch, perhaps as something more. Indeed, Bahamut keeps council with the greatest champions to have ever served him, and these allies attend him in all things.

Bahamut is Dead, Long Live Bahamut: While all gods are immortal, no being is truly unkillable. Should Bahamut die, omens and visions reveal your final quest. Your purpose, to return Bahamut to the world, is made clear. You may carry the divine embryo, but you must take bold steps to allow the godling within to awaken and resume its proper place. When you fulfill every condition, divine fire consumes your very existence to restore the god to corporeal form. The sacrifice required is absolute, its destruction required to facilitate the rebirth. Though you no longer exist, your memory lives on within the god and those who follow him, granting you a rare form of immortality—within the fondest memories of a god.

Bahamut's Vessel Features

Blessed Awakening (21st level): Increase any one of Strength, Wisdom, or Charisma by 2 points.

Whenever you spend an action point, you regain hit points as if you spent a healing surge and gain a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of your next turn.

Courageous Presence (24th level): Each ally within 5 squares of you that can see you gains a +2 bonus to saving throws and, when the target of a divine healing power, a +2 bonus to attack rolls and all defenses until the end of its next turn.

Platinum Rebirth (30th level): Once per day, when you are reduced to 0 hit points, you regain all of your hit points and transform into a Large platinum

dragon. While in this form, you gain darkvision, resist 20 cold, resist 20 fire, fly 10 (hover), *dragon bite*, and *breath weapon* (see below for these powers). In addition, each enemy within 5 squares of you takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls while you remain in this form.

Beyond those changes, becoming a dragon doesn't change your game statistics. Your equipment becomes part of your dragon form, including anything you are holding. You continue to gain the benefits of the equipment you wear. You can use the properties and the powers of implements as well as magic items that you wear, but not the properties or the powers of weapons or the powers of wondrous items. While equipment is part of your dragon form, it cannot be removed, and anything in a container that is part of your dragon form is inaccessible.

This effect lasts until the end of the encounter or until you use *breath weapon*, at which point you resume your normal form.

Dragon Bite — Class Feature

You rend your enemy with a crushing bite.

At-Will
Standard Action **Melee** 2
Target: One creature
Attack: Level + 8 vs. AC
Hit: 3d12 + 12 damage, and the target slides 1 square.

Breath Weapon — Class Feature

You open your draconic maw to release a gout of bitter cold.

Daily ✦ Cold
Standard Action **Close** blast 5
Target: Each creature in blast
Attack: Level + 6 vs. Reflex
Hit: 4d12 + 10 modifier cold damage, push the target 3 squares, and the target is immobilized (save ends).
Miss: Half damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.
Effect: After the attack, you resume your normal form.

Bahamut's Vessel Power

Seven Canaries — Bahamut's Vessel Utility 26

Seven yellow canaries blink into existence about you, each one embodying a different blessing from Bahamut.

Daily ✦ Divine
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: Seven canaries appear and fly about you, remaining until the end of the encounter or until expended. You gain the following benefits.

* Resist 15 cold.
* Resist 15 fire.
* Each ally within 5 squares of you gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls, saving throws, and skill checks.
* You can take a full complement of actions on your turn while dazed, and you can still take a standard action on your turn while you are stunned.
* Your melee and ranged attacks deal an extra 1d10 cold and fire damage.
* You gain a fly speed equal to your speed and hover.
* You gain regeneration 2.

As an immediate interrupt when an attack hits you, you can expend one canary (and one of the above benefits) to gain a +4 power bonus to defenses against that attack.

About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb is a freelance game designer with numerous design and development credits to his name including *Draconomicon™ 2: Metallic Dragons*, *Primal Power™*, *Dragon® Magazine Annual 2009*, *Adventurer's Vault™ 2*, *Divine Power™*, *Eberron® Player's Guide*, *Eberron Campaign Guide*, *Player's Handbook® 2*, *P2 Demon Queen's Enclave™*, *Manual of the Planes™*, *Martial Power™*, *Draconomicon I: Chromatic Dragons*, *the Forgotten Realms® Player's Guide*, and numerous articles in *Dragon* and *Dungeon®* magazines. Robert lives in Tennessee with his wife Stacee and his sweet potato cats.

Deities and Demigods: Bahamut

By Robert J. Schwalb
Illustrations by Rick Hershey, Tim Hibbets, and Colin Throm

The Grandfather of Dragons *commands us to be vigilant against all evil and to destroy it wherever we encounter it. Yet many who wear his noble colors are content to await the coming darkness—they think that they will be ready for the time when evil shows its hideous visage. Brothers and sisters, evil will never reveal itself. Those sworn to wickedness cannot abide the shining beacon because they find its brilliance loathsome. No, evil's servants haunt the darkness that spawns it. They bide their time. They spread evil's filthy seed to unsuspecting innocents, offering temptations even the innocent cannot refuse. We permit this festering cancer as we strive to safeguard our lands. We combat the obvious threats, but this, friends, is what darkness wants. Evil would have us fritter away all our strength against its decoys, laughing at our feeble flailing. How, I ask, can we ever hope to quench the hated one's conflagration when all we do is fight the small fires?*

The Platinum Dragon commands us to protect the weak and to safeguard the innocent from evil's depredations, yet time and again the common person succumbs to temptation We cannot wait any longer—we cannot allow another day to pass—while the Dark Lady and other vile forces plot our dooms from unseen redoubts. We must look deep within our hearts and find our purity. We must scourge our flesh to purge temptation and doubt. We must test our friends, our families, and our neighbors to be certain shadow has no hold. And where we find it, we must cleanse the flesh. We liberate the spirit.

If we falter in this holy mission, we fail.

If we quail before the horrors, evil wins.

Giving mercy, we permit evil and become no better than those we fight.

Brothers and sisters, we are at war.

–Josseth Crownblade, Platinum Talon, Templar of Bahamut

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The Platinum Dragon shines brightly in the world. Bahamut champions virtue and justice. He urges mortals to embrace their noble natures and to better themselves and the world around them. His holy texts teach them to reject the baser, destructive emotions undermining order's harmony. Erathis inspires mortals to reach further and to build and claim their rights to the natural world, but Bahamut teaches the wisdom to ensure that mortal achievements improve lives rather than destroy them. For the Platinum Dragon virtue and order are one and the same. Essentially, they are different aspects of the same ideal. Law without goodness is tyranny, while goodness without order is irresponsible and offers no protections for the weak, the infirm, and the destitute.

The only way for good to survive in the world is through an ordered society. No relativistic morality exists: Good lives outside the individual, and it sometimes remains unclear, but it is a thing to which all mortals should aspire or reject as is their choice. An ordered society reinforces morality and encourages mortals to be generous, temperate, and peaceful, while its laws define unacceptable behaviors as being anything that would threaten or undermine the common good. Within an ordered society, the path to virtue is clear.

Justice, then, is vital to realizing the good in the world. Without consequences for acting against the common good, and with no punishment for violating those principles on which a society depends to thrive, laws have no meaning.

Bahamut in the World

Bahamut stands at the forefront among those gods who champion good. Communities founded on principles of justice, equality, and virtue include the Platinum Dragon in their prayers. For all that mortals look to Bahamut to resolve their troubles, not all subscribe to the full tenets espoused by his teachings.

Absolute good causes problems for many mortals. Good and evil are subjective concepts shaped by culture and social demands. Rather than struggling with an external ethical model, many faithful allow their personal moral compasses to guide them. Even among Bahamut's servants, opinions vary as to the degree to which a society should shape moral ideals, and many have waged bitter disputes over identifying the good or its absence in a community's laws.

Good lives outside the individual, and it sometimes remains unclear, but it is a thing to which all mortals should aspire or reject as is their choice.

Without regular discourse with the gods and when lacking an overarching religious structure, most faiths splinter and fracture, since personal interpretations about a particular commandment divide otherwise likeminded servants. The most dangerous sects are those that latch onto a particular commandment, placing special importance on the divine decree so that it eclipses any other command the god might offer. Taking a particular piece of dogma out of context can pervert the god's intentions and have disastrous results in the larger world.

What follows are ways Bahamut's faithful might take extremist positions regarding his commandments.

Honor and Justice: When a lord fails to enforce the laws equally in a community, Bahamut's priests supplant the constables and mete justice. No matter how inconsequential, all crimes receive the same punishment: death.

Protect the Weak: A Bahamut sect moves into a poverty-stricken barony. Seeing the lord's relative wealth and security compared to the peasants, the sect sacks the baron's castle and gives away his wealth. Not satisfied, the sect assumes control over the land, violating privacy and restricting freedoms to ensure a better quality of life, or an equal one at least, for all.

Defend Just Order: When the aristocracy revolts against the queen, Bahamut's templars come to the monarch's defense, seeing her rule as just and divinely sanctioned. What the templars do not realize is that the queen is secretly plotting to plunge the nation into war by sending her armies to conquer a neighboring state.

Liberate the Oppressed: A nearby forest community under a druid king's rule rejects the social conventions upheld in a neighboring kingdom. A Bahamut priest sees the community as lawless, morally confused, and deceived by its leaders. To liberate the people he sees as being oppressed, he leads an invasion force to unseat the druid king and install a leader more akin to his beliefs.

Divine Distance

Those who take a rational view toward Bahamut and his doctrines might question why the god makes no effort to correct his followers' mistakes. Extremists

can cause as much suffering and destruction as those servants dedicated to Bane in his worst aspect. How can a god purported to represent justice, honor, and nobility tolerate such actions by his supposed servants? Learned theologians have debated these issues for ages and no definitive answer has yet emerged.

Some suggest mortals incorrectly assume rationality is necessary to understand divinity. Perhaps the gods encourage fanaticism. Perhaps they depend on their zealous servants to advance their aims in the world. Maybe these extremists have a greater understanding about what is at stake if they fail and thus fight all the harder because of it. They might pursue misguided goals, but what good they work along the way might serve a higher purpose.

A chilling thought to be sure, and scholars retreat from such speculation. Instead, they claim a god's distance from mortal events is due to the ban placed on the gods by the primal spirits after the Dawn War. After incalculable devastation, the spirits prohibited the gods from taking a direct hand in the world to ensure that the natural world does not become a battleground for gods and primordials again. Since mortals come to the gods freely, how they interpret a divine decree is a matter of personal choice. The gods are remote and thus do not address deviations because they are prevented from doing so.

Of course, the easiest and most humiliating answer is that individual mortals are too insignificant and too numerous to draw a god's attention. Concerned with far greater matters than the petty dramas unfolding on the mortal world, a misguided band, no matter their actions, is nothing compared to the challenges the gods must contend with in the planes.

The Platinum Talons

"Suffer not the transgressor!"

If time proves anything, awaiting evil does nothing to defeat evil. Left to its own devices, it festers, spreading its corruption to all corners, planting dark seeds in mortal hearts and turning them against the proper order. As long as war is waged against evil's servants, there can be no victory. To defeat the darkness—to cast it from this world—a true warrior must suspect all of treachery and test everyone he or she meets to ascertain the purity of the heart, and, where he or she finds corruption, destroy it.

If time proves anything, awaiting evil does nothing to defeat evil.

The following organization demonstrates how a group dedicated to Bahamut might go adrift from the god's intentions through fanatical beliefs.

The Platinum Talons Lore

History

Common Knowledge: The Platinum Talons is a militant order dedicated to Bahamut. They use force to further their cause, scouring the countryside for wicked servants dedicated to dark powers. Much good has been done in their name, and their vigilance checks evil's spread.

History DC 15: Although the Talons commit themselves to fighting evil, their single-minded efforts can and have blinded them to the unintended suffering that results from their crusades. Wherever the Talons go, they leave behind shattered lives and ruined communities. The Talons make no apology for their actions because they believe their ends justify whatever means they use.

History DC 20: The misery the Talons create exists in the ashes and bones of those whose paths they've crossed. One only need look to Four Oaks to see just how the Talons operate. Once a prosperous forest village, Four Oaks had rumors about witchcraft and diabolism dogging it. The people were innocent, but they placed little stock in gods, instead embracing the "old" ways and the primal spirits who sheltered their lands. The Talons followed their suspicions and descended on the settlement. They interrogated forty innocents and when they found nothing, they burned the village to the ground. When questioned, the Talons' only response was "everyone dies, but evil always prospers."

Religion

Common Knowledge: The Talons fight to purge iniquity from civilized lands to ensure harmonious and ordered societies.

Religion DC 15: Cleaving to Bahamut's commandment to oppose evil on all fronts, the Talons believe they fulfill all other commandments by focusing on purging corruption from their lands. Their more intelligent enemies realize how outwardly focused the Talons are and thus embed themselves not only within established cities and nations, but also within the organization. So even if the Talons find some of the embedded enemies outside their

organization, because the Talons turn their suspicious eyes away from themselves and only upon those they protect, those who succeed in finding a position within the Talons remain entrenched.

Religion DC 20: The Talons are notorious for brutality. When they enter a community, they round up all suspects and question them by using torture to extract confessions. Since such methods produce dubious results at best, the Talons operate on false information.

Organization

The Platinum Talons are extremists who serve Bahamut, but pervert the Platinum Dragon's teachings to serve their own agenda. They recognize no authority but their own and if they find themselves challenged, their opposition withers beneath their scrutiny. Lands cleansed by the Talons are broken, burned, and cowed by their religious authority.

Leader: Josseth Crownblade founded the Platinum Talons and leads the extremists still. Those who doubt him find their misgivings dashed during his fiery sermons. He is a fervent believer in Bahamut and maintains a strict lifestyle of abstention from worldly comforts and luxuries.

Headquarters: The Talons have holdings through Nerath's ruins. The crusaders claim squatter's rights on crumbling buildings by occupying old temples, keeps, and even fortified hamlets. Authority rests in Crownblade's hands. Currently, Josseth commands his followers from an old orphanage burned during the White Ruin's invasion long ago.

Hierarchy: The Talons look to Josseth Crownblade for their missions. Seven priests advise him on spiritual matters as well as strategic ones. Crownblade chose these advisors for their oaths and supposed purity, though outsiders question their private intentions.

The Talons use military ranks assigned based on merit and experience. The ranking officers are captains and each commands a force of soldiers and inquisitors. Spies and informants also help the Talons, though people of such low character, while useful, are not pure enough to serve the Talons directly.

Members: The Talons recruit heavily from commoners, using fear to cut ties to communities and bind them to the larger organization. Recruits undergo indoctrination and religious training at temples allied with the Talons until ready to serve.

Personalities

The Platinum Talons depend on two key figures.

Josseth Crownblade

"Evil loathes pain."

Leader and general for the Platinum Talons, Josseth Crownblade embodies the organization and its purpose in the world.

An elderly man clad in white-enameled armor with a snowy cloak hanging from his shoulders, he shows no sign of infirmity despite his advanced years. Bright blue eyes flick back and forth and where they land, they pierce the soul.

Lore

History DC 25

The Platinum Talons' spiritual and temporal leader was not always the righteous man he is today. Josseth spent his youth adventuring. Though he battled terrible monsters and thwarted countless plots, plunder and glory drove him. No matter how much treasure he hauled out from the ground, Josseth felt something was missing. After defeating demon-worshipers in the Underdark, he stood vigil in a Bahamut shrine hoping to find wisdom.

Seven days he knelt and prayed, forgoing food and sleep. At the end of the last day, an old man entered the temple, canaries perched on his shoulders, chirping merrily.

No stranger to Bahamut's lore, Josseth knew he stood in his god's presence. He fell to his knees, not daring to meet the old man's eyes let alone touch his hem. The old man touched the adventurer, telling him to rise, yet Josseth would not. Bahamut asked why he suffered, what he hoped to achieve by so much prayer and self-neglect. Josseth answered he wanted for wisdom and a purpose—a way to fill the hole in his heart.

The old man answered, "Josseth, the purpose you seek lies not in a safe temple, but in the world around you. It hides beneath each rock, in hearts darkened by fear and hate, and in the tyrants who would use these lands for their own purposes. That, my son, is your destiny. Linger not in these walls. Seek your future in the world as you always have."

The old man hobbled out the door, leaving Josseth to consider what he said. Josseth concluded he should abandon his adventuring life and commit himself to cleanse the lands. He would find the evil and destroy it.

Using Josseth

Josseth is a talented warrior, but he is an aging one. In place of skill, he uses righteous ferocity, and he uses zeal in place of strength and battle prowess. Josseth inspires those who fight alongside him, becoming a holy icon to which his followers can draw their strength. With Josseth nearby, all doubts vanish, and hurts fade to be replaced by unwavering devotion to destroying wickedness.

The Platinum Talons reveal their true colors in the excessive force they use and the innocent blood staining their hands.

Roleplaying

Josseth is mad. His convictions blind him to rational thought, and he weighs all decisions based on whatever revelations strike him at the moment. For all he talks of righteous order, he can be unpredictable, and he draws strange conclusions where the facts would otherwise be clear. Josseth is also unapologetic: If a thousand innocents die in pursuit of one corrupt soul, their sacrifice, while great, is justified.

Josseth Crownblade Level 18 Elite Soldier (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 4,000

Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +8
Infectious Fervor aura 3; each ally within the aura gains a +2 bonus to saving throws.
HP 346; **Bloodied** 173
AC 33; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 31
Saving Throws +2, +4 against charm and fear effects
Speed 5
Action Points 1

⊕ **Flail** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Radiant, Weapon**
+25 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 damage plus 1d6 radiant damage. *Effect:* The target is marked until the end of Josseth's next turn.

↯ **Worthy Sacrifice** (immediate interrupt, when an ally within range drops to 0 hit points; at-will)
Ranged 20; the triggering ally makes a basic attack as a free action.

↯ **Order's Virtue** (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Charm**
Ranged 5; +23 vs. Will; the target chooses to take 4d10 + 7 radiant damage or become dominated (save ends).

↯ **Suffer Not the Infidel** (minor 1/round; at-will)
Ranged 5; targets one ally; the target shifts 2 squares and makes a basic attack as a free action.

↯ **Brilliant Rebuke** (free, when a creature marked by Josseth makes an attack that does not include him as a target; at-will) ✦ **Radiant**
Close burst 5; targets the triggering creature; +23 vs. Will; 2d6 radiant damage, the target is dazed until it is no longer marked, and each enemy adjacent to the target is blinded until the end of Josseth's next turn.

↯ **United We Stand** (minor; encounter)
Close burst 3; targets allies; Josseth pulls the target 1 square, and the target gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and all defenses until the end of Josseth's next turn.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common
Skills Diplomacy +21, Intimidate +21, Religion +15
Str 16 (+12) **Dex** 18 (+13) **Wis** 9 (+8)
Con 21 (+14) **Int** 13 (+10) **Cha** 24 (+16)
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, flail

Josseth Tactics

Battle awakens Josseth's wrath. The commander charges the closest foe, calling for his allies to follow. Once engaged, he presses the attack, using *brilliant rebuke* and *order's virtue* to force his opponents to see his purpose. He then manages the battle by urging his allies to attack with *suffer not the infidel.*

Salavar Dag

"I merely followed orders."

Salavar Dag is one of Josseth Crownblade's most trusted followers. The commander grooms him to take over when Josseth dies.

A hulking half-orc male with short blonde hair, plain features, and cold blue eyes, this knight wears gleaming plate armor and an azure cloak, plus he wields a wavy-bladed bastard sword.

Lore

Streetwise DC 20

Salavar Dag is the third heir apparent to Josseth's mantle. After the first two fell in battle, Crownblade selected Dag not for his wit or ingenuity, but for his strength and willingness to do whatever he must. Salavar is a competent warrior. He is obedient and does as commanded no matter how repellent the order.

Using Salavar

Salavar knows nothing about religion and secretly regards any religious affiliation as a moral failing. He's a poor leader in combat, but his followers fight just as hard for fear of what would happen if they disappointed him.

Roleplaying

Salavar is a useful servant, but he lacks conviction. He has no faith in the gods, and he assesses the world in purely mortal terms. He doesn't participate in religious debates. Instead, he sees the world in black and white, with any semblance of gray lumped in with the corrupted. He's obedient to a fault and never questions orders. He is a poor candidate for redeeming the Platinum Talons, but then this might be what Josseth wants.

Salavar Dag	**Level 16 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid, half-orc	XP 1,400
Initiative +12	**Senses** Perception +10; low-light vision
HP 192; **Bloodied** 96	
AC 28; **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 25	
Speed 6 (8 when charging)	
ⓘ **Great Axe** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+19 vs. AC; 2d12 + 6 damage (crit 2d12 + 30).	
⇜ **Killing Arc** (standard; recharges when first bloodied or when an enemy scores a critical hit against Salavar) ✦ **Weapon**	
Close burst 1; targets enemies; +19 vs. AC; 2d12 + 6 damage (crit 2d12 + 32). *Effect:* Salavar shifts 1 square and repeats the attack.	
Furious Assault (free, when Salavar hits an enemy; encounter)	
The attack deals 1[W] extra damage if it's a weapon attack or 1d8 extra damage if it isn't.	
Half-Orc Resilience (when first bloodied)	
Salavar gains 10 temporary hit points.	
Obedient Servant	
Salavar Dag deals 1[W] extra damage on any melee basic attack he makes granted by an ally.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** Common, Giant
Skills Endurance +16, Intimidate +10	
Str 26 (+16)	**Dex** 18 (+12) **Wis** 15 (+10)
Con 22 (+14)	**Int** 10 (+8) **Cha** 11 (+8)
Equipment plate armor, execution axe	

Salavar Tactics

Salavar fights as directed. Without guidance, he makes a charge attack, striking at the largest concentration of enemy groupings. Once surrounded, he uses *killing arc* to rip apart his enemies. Salavar has little use for subtlety or tactics.

Using the Platinum Talons

The Platinum Talons are best used as paragon tier villains. For adventurers just cresting the heroic tier, the Talons might be allies or benefactors even for up-and-coming heroes. The Platinum Talons reveal their true colors in the excessive force they use and the innocent blood staining their hands. They demand fanatical service and tolerate no dissent from their servants. What were once staunch allies can become dangerous foes: The PCs must divide their attention to their shared enemy and the Platinum Talons' excesses.

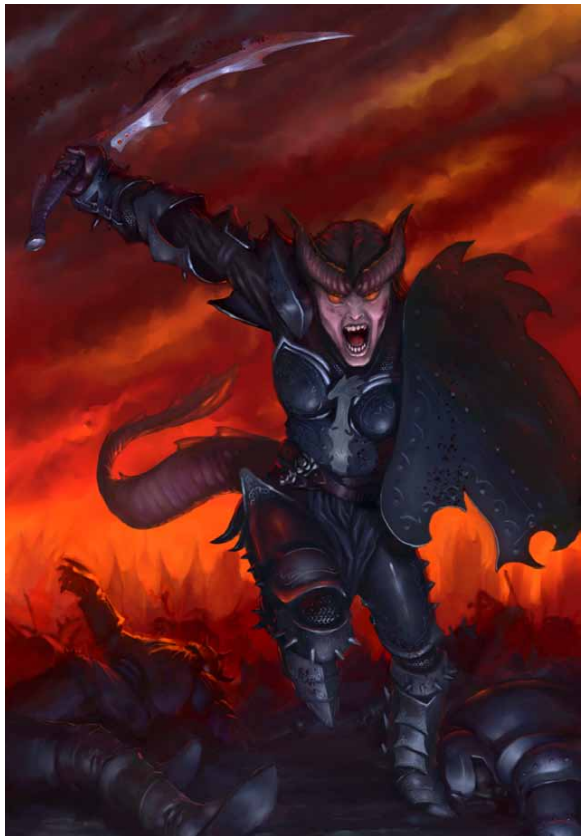
United Purpose (Low-Paragon)

The adventurers, settling in a large and powerful city, cross paths with a Tiamat cult working behind the scenes to subvert their city to their dark cause. Blocked at every turn by ignorant obstructionists, the adventurers have little luck in breaking through the bureaucracy to ferret out the villainy. Luckily, they meet the Platinum Talons. With their aid, the adventurers uncover Tiamat's hidden temple and destroy the cult, thus saving the city from the doom the cultists intended. As part of their reward, the Talons invite the heroes into their organization, so they can truly join forces against the greater threat Tiamat poses.

Tarnished Platinum (Mid-Paragon)

Whether or not the PCs join the Talons, the organization's holy purpose reveals its imperfections, fractures, and corrosion in their steely resolve in a manner that makes a PC believe the Talons are somehow compromised. The character might hear about outlying settlements burned to the ground, and commoners could blame the Talons in whispers. Investigation reveals a whole other side to the Talons. Dark tales reveal torture, crusades, and murder.

The Talons grow wise to the adventurers' queries and perceive their inquiries as reflecting doubts about their mission. An ally within the society might approach them, trying to reaffirm the party's commitment, but evidence uncovered should be too profound for even unaligned heroes to tolerate. In the end, the Talons declare the PCs apostates and drive them underground.



Lanced Corruption (High-Paragon)

With the Platinum Talons opposing them, the adventurers find themselves beset by their agents. No matter what good the heroes achieve, the Talons are never far away to claim credit for their victories or to sabotage their efforts. When the PCs grow tired, they can take on the Platinum Talons to destroy them or perhaps redeem them to serve a better purpose. Their efforts culminate in an attack against Josseth Crownblade. Facing the commander on his turf, the characters must battle through zealots, angels, and deluded servants to end the madman's reign. If the adventurers succeed, the organization's future is in their hand. They might take charge, but they have to contend with bitter elements working from within to weaken their control. Or, they might disband them altogether. This creates new enemies to harry them as they move into the epic tier.

Agents of the Platinum Talons

The Platinum Talons draw people from all walks of life and every background. Most see the organization as a force for good in the world. The constant war to which the organization subscribes chews through recruits at an alarming rate. Those who survive either become so jaded that the Talons' excesses are no longer objectionable or they go mad with zeal, seeing the Josseth as a divine emissary who can do no wrong.

Brassbound

The brassbound are zealots. They prove their commitment to the Platinum Talons by dripping molten brass on their forearms. This act burns away their wickedness and symbolizes their commitment to Crownblade.

Brassbound	**Level 16 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 350
Initiative +15	**Senses** Perception +8
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 30; **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 25	
Speed 5	
⨺ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+21 vs. AC; 10 damage.	
Aggressive Step (minor; at-will)	
The brassbound shifts 1 square to a square adjacent to an enemy.	
Avenge Me! (when reduced to 0 hit points)	
One adjacent ally makes a melee basic attack as a free action.	
Alignment Lawful good	**Languages** Common
Str 24 (+15)	**Dex** 21 (+13) **Wis** 11 (+8)
Con 19 (+12)	**Int** 10 (+8) **Cha** 15 (+10)
Equipment chainmail, light shield, longsword	

Brassbound Tactics

Brassbound see every battle as a chance to prove their devotion. They charge into battle to engage the closest foe.

Iron Talon

The Talons burn or execute anyone they deem corrupted, but the truly penitent might be spared if properly cleansed.

Iron Talon **Level 12 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, tiefling XP 700
Initiative +10 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision
HP 120; **Bloodied** 60
AC 28; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 25
Resist 15 fire
Speed 6
⊕ **Bastard Sword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+19 vs. AC (+20 vs. AC against a bloodied target); 1d10 + 5 damage.
✧ **Righteous Challenge** (minor; recharges when no creature is marked by this power)
Close burst 1; targets one enemy; the target is marked (save ends).
Brilliant Doom (free, when a creature marked by the iron talon shifts; at-will) ✦ **Fire, Radiant**
The target takes 2d6 fire and radiant damage.
Infernal Wrath (minor; encounter)
The iron talon gains a +1 power bonus to its next attack roll against an enemy that hit it since the iron talon's last turn. If the attack hits and deals damage, the iron talon deals 5 extra damage.
Alignment Lawful good **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Bluff +13, Stealth +8
Str 21 (+11) **Dex** 15 (+8) **Wis** 13 (+7)
Con 16 (+9) **Int** 12 (+7) **Cha** 20 (+11)
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, bastard sword

Iron Talon Tactics

Iron talons emerge from their interrogations harder and fiercer than they ever were when they walked in shadow. Rather than engage the enemy, iron talons hold back to protect their allies. They form a wall to block all attackers.

Cobalt Inquisitor

The Platinum Talons employ interrogators to tease out the enemy's secrets, but when they need to question a hard-to-crack subject, they call in a cobalt inquisitor. Even the toughest and most willful prisoners eventually break under the cobalt inquisitor's withering glare.

Cobalt Inquisitor **Level 14 Controller (Leader)**
Medium immortal humanoid, deva XP 1,000
Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +11
HP 134; **Bloodied** 67
AC 26; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 27 (+1 to all defenses against bloodied enemies)
Resist 10 necrotic, 10 radiant
Speed 6
⊕ **Quarterstaff** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+19 vs. AC; 2d8 + 4 damage, and one enemy within 5 squares of the cobalt inquisitor other than the primary target takes 5 psychic damage.
↗ **Holy Shackles** (standard; recharges when the target makes a save to end this effect) ✦ **Charm, Psychic**
Ranged 10; +18 vs. Will; 1d10 + 6 psychic damage, and the target is restrained (save ends). Each enemy that starts its turn adjacent to the target while the target is restrained by this power is immobilized (save ends).
↗ **Inquisitor's Query** (minor; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Psychic, Radiant**
Ranged 10; one immobilized creature; +18 vs. Will; the target is dominated (save ends), and the immobilized condition ends. *Miss:* The target takes 10 psychic damage.
✧ **Divine Command** (standard; at-will)
Close burst 5; targets one ally or two minion allies the cobalt inquisitor can see; the target makes a basic attack as a free action.
Memory of a Thousand Lifetimes (free, when the cobalt inquisitor makes an attack roll, a skill check, or an ability check and dislikes the result; encounter)
The cobalt inquisitor adds 1d6 to the triggering roll.
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common
Skills History +15, Religion +15
Str 19 (+11) **Dex** 11 (+7) **Wis** 19 (+11)
Con 14 (+9) **Int** 16 (+10) **Cha** 22 (+13)
Equipment chainmail, quarterstaff

Cobalt Inquisitor Tactics

The Talons fear cobalt inquisitors and thus fight harder when in their presence. The inquisitor holds back, keeping its servants close to avoid hand-to-hand combat. As long as they remain protected, the cobalt inquisitors goad their warriors to attack and bend their enemies to their wills.

Copper Guard

The best warriors of the brassbound can climb in rank to join the copper guard. These warriors protect the inquisitors and accompany officers onto the battlefield.

Copper Guard **Level 15 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 1,200
Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +8
HP 148; **Bloodied** 74
AC 31; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 25
Resist see *copper defense*
Speed 5
⊕ **Spear** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Lightning, Weapon**
+22 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage plus 1d6 lightning damage. *Effect:* The target is marked until the end of the copper guard's next turn.
↯ **Jolting Reminder** (immediate interrupt, when a target marked by the copper guard makes an attack that does not include the copper guard; at-will) ✦ **Lightning**
Reach 2; +20 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 6 lightning damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares.
✧ **Shocking Condemnation** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Lightning**
Close burst 1; +20 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 6 lightning damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of the copper guard's next turn.
Copper Defense
A copper guard gains resist 20 lightning when adjacent to at least one other copper guard.
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Draconic
Str 23 (+13) **Dex** 20 (+12) **Wis** 13 (+8)
Con 20 (+12) **Int** 11 (+7) **Cha** 17 (+10)
Equipment plate armor, spear

Copper Guard Tactics

Copper guards work in pairs, keeping close to pin down opponents long enough to knock them back with *jolting reminder.*

Adamantine Sentinel

Ten years ago, Josseth Crownblade uncovered a vault holding fifty warforged held in stasis. When he entered the room, the magic failed and the living constructs awakened. Crownblade recruited them to his organization, and now he uses them as his personal guard.

Adamantine Vanguard	**Level 17 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid (living construct), warforged	XP 1,600
Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +11	
HP 201; **Bloodied** 100	
AC 30; **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 27	
Saving Throws +2 against ongoing damage	
Speed 6	
⊕ **Fullblade** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+20 vs. AC; 2d12 + 7 damage (crit 2d12 + 31).	
⸸ **Unrelenting Offense** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+20 vs. AC; 2d12 + 7 damage (crit 2d12 + 31), the target is pushed 1 square, and the adamantine vanguard shifts into the space the target vacated.	
Inexorable Advance (move; at-will)	
The adamantine vanguard pushes an adjacent creature 1 square and shifts 1 square into the space the target vacated.	
Warforged Resolve (minor; encounter) ✦ **Healing**	
The adamantine vanguard gains 11 temporary hit points and can make a saving throw against an ongoing damage effect. If it uses this power while bloodied, it also regains 11 hit points.	
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common	
Skills Endurance +15, Intimidate +10	
Str 24 (+15) **Dex** 21 (+13) **Wis** 16 (+11)	
Con 21 (+13) **Int** 8 (+7) **Cha** 11 (+8)	
Equipment plate armor, fullblade	

Adamantine Vanguard Tactics

Nothing can stop the adamantine vanguard's approach. It marches forward, swinging its massive sword to drive the enemy back. Even when damaged, each one struggles back to its feet, recovering to press on with the attack.

Encounters and Allies

The Platinum Talons form into tight-knit units formed from devoted members. Sometimes they use creatures from outside the organization, such as angels and dragons, but these alliances are uncommon at best.

Level 11 Encounter (XP 3,400)
- ✦ 2 iron talons (level 12 soldier)
- ✦ 1 young gold dragon (level 9 solo controller; *Monster Manual*® 2, page 80)

Level 15 Encounter (XP 6,200)
- ✦ 4 brassbound (level 16 minion skirmisher)
- ✦ 1 cobalt inquisitor (level 14 controller)
- ✦ 2 copper guard (level 15 soldier)
- ✦ Salavar Dag (level 16 brute)

Level 18 Encounter (XP 10,000)
- ✦ 3 adamantine vanguards (level 17 brute)
- ✦ 1 angel of battle (level 15 skirmisher; *Monster Manual*, page 14)
- ✦ Josseth Crownblade (level 18 elite soldier)

About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb is a freelance game designer with numerous design and development credits to his name. You'll find his most recent work in *Draconomicon*™*: Metallic Dragons, Primal Power*™, *Dragon*® *Magazine Annual 2009*, and *Adventurer's Vault*™ 2. Robert lives in Tennessee.

Playing Githzerai

By Chris Sims
Illustrations by Brandon Leach

"When a mind does not know itself, it is flawed. When a mind is flawed, its bearer is flawed. When the bearer is flawed, that which the bearer touches is flawed. It is said that what a flawed one sees, that one's hands make broken. Gith is such a one. Instead of following her way, remember that strength lies in knowing oneself. In knowing yourself, your true center, you shall endure and grow stronger."

~Zerthimon

Githzerai have a mysterious past and an enigmatic existence. Few know the truth about these taciturn folk. What follows is a record of the most common legends of the githzerai race, and the closest approximation of the truth a non-githzerai is likely to ever know.

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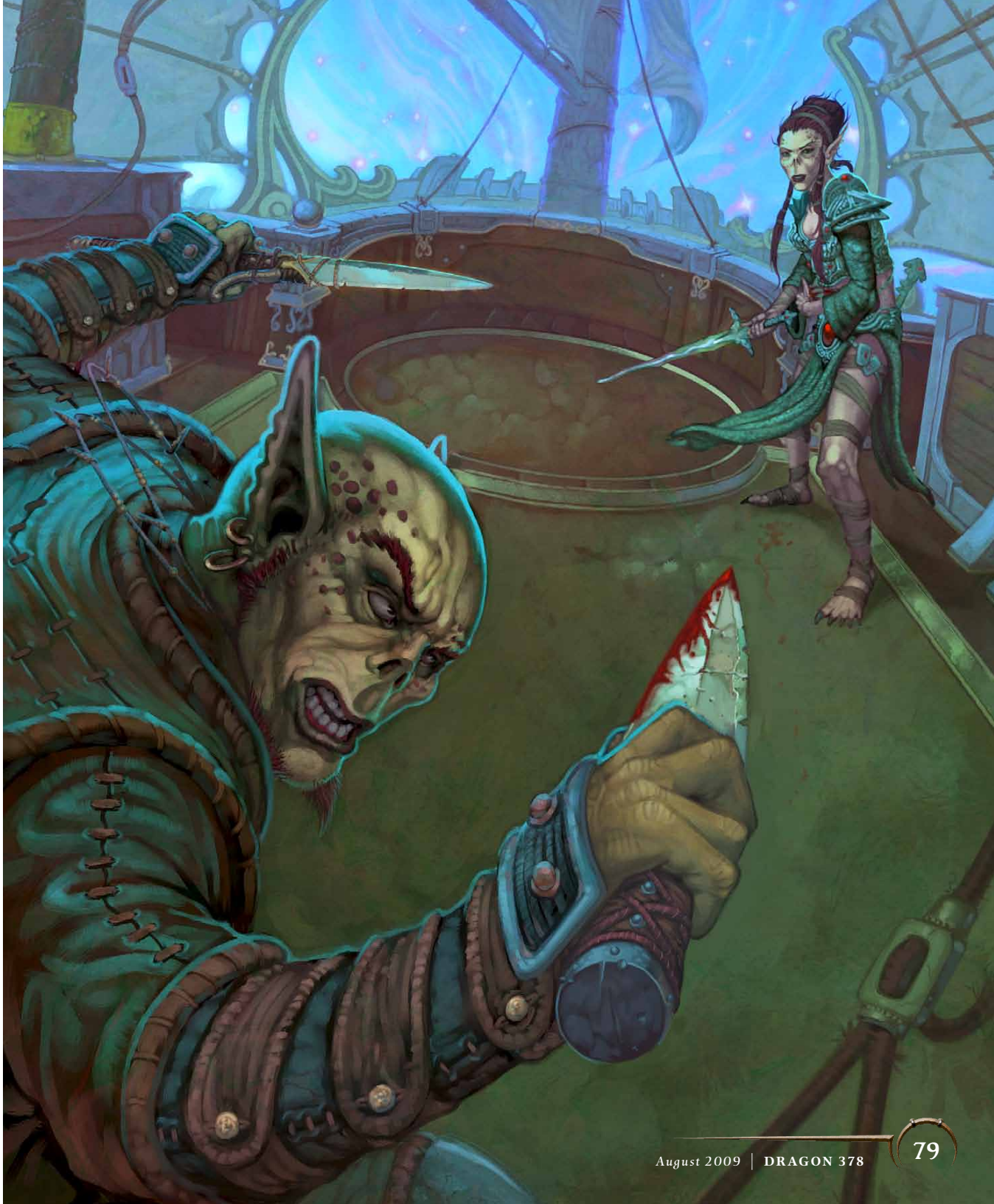


Origin

Long after the Dawn War, but before the great empires of known history dominated their regions, mind flayers ruled a great dominion in the Underdark. They consumed or enslaved all other humanoids within their reach. With their foul powers, they created innumerable monsters, some of which still trouble the world today.

In time, they acquired or created a caste of humanoid slaves to live among them as servants and expendable warriors. Who or what these humanoids were before they came under the sway of the illithids is lost to history. It is likely that the mind flayers, at the zenith of their power, created these folk from a combination of humanoid creatures and unclean Far Realm forces.

Githyanki and githzerai issue from these folk, whom they refer to as "the forerunners." The slaves suffered untold horrors at the tentacles of their masters. The most common was the constant fear of being selected as a meal, an experimental subject, or a sacrifice to some alien monstrosity. Prudently, the mind flayers initially kept their slave populations small enough to easily control.

As is the way with those who rule secure holdings for too long, however, the illithids grew complacent in their supremacy. Desiring more time to pursue their alien ways, as well as more servants and ready food, the mind flayers paid less and less attention to their culling practices. The forerunners grew in numbers, until they easily outnumbered their overlords.

Meanwhile, the slaves developed secret powers and subversive cabals. The forerunners nursed their hatred of their masters and longed to be free. They spoke furtively of revolt, and more than once, a brave few tried to rebel and failed. Then, a warrior woman named Gith rose among the ranks of the rebels, and she became the final catalyst for all-out rebellion.

The war that followed was long and bloody. With each battle, more slaves joined the ranks of the rebels and more mind flayers were slain. Eventually, none of the forerunners remained enslaved—all had won their freedom or died at the hands of their fearful overseers.

Seemingly unsatisfied with mere freedom, Gith then began a pogrom to wipe out all mind flayers, their servants, and any of the free forerunners who opposed her. Her ambition knew no bounds, as she then planned to turn her armies toward the conquest of the world and the planes beyond. Rather than allow her people a moment to enjoy their hard-won freedom, to explore what they were and what they could become in peace, she planned an unceasing war.

A philosopher named Zerthimon rose to oppose Gith. He did so at first with words, teaching that Gith's crusade simply led the forerunners into yet another form of bondage. In her rage and warmongering, he claimed, Gith proved she was unfit to lead. To follow her was to follow yet another tyrant into a hopeless cycle of destruction. Zerthimon preached that the mind flayers were beaten beyond hope of recovery. He said that the forerunners really needed to retreat into introspection—to learn about themselves so they could grow in unity, wisdom, and strength.

Zerthimon was influential, but Gith saw him as a threat to her rule. Instead of tolerating dissent and accepting debate, she proved Zerthimon right. Civil war erupted between those who supported Gith and those who followed the teachings of Zerthimon.

The battles ended with both sides so crippled that they retreated far from one another to recuperate. The githyanki—or "children of Gith" in Deep Speech—departed for the Astral Sea with their queen. Zerthimon perished in the fighting on the world, but his followers, the githzerai—or "those who spurn Gith"—remained there, listening to their inner voices and the primal spirits.

Githzerai still maintain holdings in the world, more so than the githyanki. Eventually, however, large numbers of them left the world for the Elemental Chaos. They did so to gain distance from the githyanki and, as Zerthimon had taught, to better know themselves in the face of adversity.

Current Affairs

Common threads unite githzerai, but disparate groups maintain autonomous settlements. Each fortress, monastery, or settlement has githzerai connected by family and traditional lines, such as a school of philosophy or monastic practice. Worthies referred to as "elders" guide the development and tasks in each locale, using wisdom rather than strict laws to mete out justice and do what is best for individuals and the group. An elder might, in fact, be quite young, but he or she must be a proven pillar of the community before being granted the title.

A given circle of elders, as an assembly of elders is called, keeps in contact with other githzerai settlements to facilitate dealing with large-scale threats. Zerthimon's respected teachings serve to keep most githzerai on at least similar philosophical ground. The concept of the circle of elders is ancient, based on Zerthimon's fellow philosophers, among whom he was the most vocal.

Since ancient times, all githzerai have also maintained a common vigil against the influence of the Far Realm on the world and the planes. They watch their estranged kin, the githyanki, for any sign of unacceptable advancement. In both cases, githzerai move, without committing to full-scale war, to oppose any tip in the balance of power. They still consider mind flayers to be sworn enemies, and they pitilessly thwart the violent machinations of the githyanki.

Although this behavior is often attributed to hatred, this is a gross oversimplification. Githzerai strive, with limited resources and a measure of fanaticism, to make sure their adversaries never gain a serious advantage that could lead again to the enslavement or harm of the githzerai as a people. They do so for a variety of obvious reasons, many among them good. The apparent intolerance githzerai have for their enemies is also attributable to a proactive and preemptive mindset among the conscientious githzerai. Although githzerai can and do hate, such emotion is a flaw of the mind that Gith suffered from, according to Zerthimon, and most strive to purge themselves of this emotion.

Githzerai in Your Campaign

It might seem like githzerai are willing outsiders, largely insular and hard to pull into an existing Dungeons & Dragons® campaign world. The isolation githzerai choose for their settlements actually gives you an easy inroad to including them in a campaign. If a githzerai monastery, outpost, or fortress happens to exist in a tract of wilderness, it's entirely possible that only the githzerai know of it. As planar travelers, the githzerai might also be recent arrivals in the area.

A hidden githzerai cloister can be the origin point for a githzerai PC as easily as any known githzerai holding on your world map. Furthermore, such a locale is a useful point of light in what could be a hostile region. Githzerai are slow to trust, but they aren't cruel enough to leave those in need to the elements. Larger githzerai settlements can even be doorways to the planes, especially the Elemental Chaos.

Each githzerai seeks personal perfection, which can be accomplished only through meditation, study, and action in the world. Githzerai also have natural enemies in aberrant creatures, githyanki, and any other destructive creature that threatens githzerai safety. Githzerai have the same reasons, and more, to venture from their holds, at least in small numbers, that any other race has.

Alternatives to the official take on githzerai are also possible. Githzerai could be examples of what happens to the rare mortal humanoid who is touched by the Far Realm but comes out of the experience fortified instead of corrupted. Githyanki and/or githzerai might still be once-human (or another race) slaves of the mind flayers or some other evil, debasing force. Free githzerai are then rebels who help other humanoids oppose the enslavers. Another option is that githzerai are simply descendants of another race—elves, perhaps—who rejected the world for a life of constant tribulation in the wilderness and Elemental Chaos. Their physical alterations might be the effects of long-term exposure to the spirits and elements. It is even possible that githzerai are simply native to the Elemental Chaos and have moved to the world in small numbers.

Githzerai in the Forgotten Realms

Githzerai in the Forgotten Realms® campaign setting reside in the Elemental Chaos and remote locations in the world and planes. In Warrior's Rest, the dominion of Tempus, the githzerai keep a sizeable fortress and numerous monasteries to better learn various methods of combat and test their mettle against the warring dead. Githzerai outposts are more common in the Underdark, particularly in Old Shanatar, near githyanki or mind flayer holdings. A particularly large and secret hold, Karokrath, stands in the badlands of Xian, keeping watch on the mind flayer city of Oryndoll 26 miles under the wilderness between Nathlan and the Vilhon Wilds. It also sends scouts and spies to monitor the githyanki citadel of Gatchorof under the Snowflake Mountains. The elders of Karokrath are working on a plan to initiate open battle, which they can capitalize on, between Oryndoll and Gatchorof. Closer to the heart of civilization, in Waterdeep a cabal of githzerai resides in Mistshore, apparently descended from those who rooted out a cruel githzerai assassin lord in Skullport long ago.

Githzerai in Eberron

In the Eberron® campaign setting, the story of the folk that would become githzerai and githyanki is much the same. They were slaves to mind flayers from Xoriat and, indirectly, their masters the daelkyr. History has disparate tales—some say that illithids simply created these races, while others claim the mind flayers' slaves were altered hobgoblins or humans. Chronicles agree that githyanki were members of the laborer and warrior slave castes. Githzerai were personal servants, bodyguards, and artisans. When the Gatekeepers cut Xoriat's ties to the world, throwing the mind flayers into disarray, the illithids' slaves rebelled. The gained freedom, but found their previous differences in caste an insurmountable obstacle to peaceful coexistence. Githyanki moved to the Astral Sea, and githzerai to the Elemental Chaos—Kythri in particular.

Within the world, githzerai have numerous holds in the Shadow Marches, where they are allies of the Gatekeepers. They also keep outposts in the Byeshk Mountains of Droaam, the Endworld Mountains of Q'barra, and the Icetop Mountains of Karrnath. The githzerai monastery of Zuokelled stands in the Seawall Mountains within sight of the dead-gray mist of the Mournland. Githzerai settlements are hidden in Xen'drik, keeping watch on githyanki city-states there. The githzerai also have holds in Adar, which has prominent connections to the Elemental Chaos, and remote parts of Riedra, where they eye the Inspired with great suspicion.

Religion

Those who know of githzerai and their culture might characterize them as an atheistic people. It is true that githzerai have no unanimous religion. Their settlements rarely have more than a simple public shrine dedicated to meditation rather than one or more deities. However, githzerai eschew public religious displays because they consider religion wholly personal.

If any tradition can be ascribed to the githzerai, it must be that they do not revere the gods. During their long enslavement, the only "superior" beings they knew of—indeed, that they were allowed to know of—were their mind flayer masters. Although a few visionaries had deific inspiration during this time, most of the slaves had no reason to suspect beings such as deities existed, beyond the transcendent Far Realm horrors of which the mind flayers whispered. When githzerai won free of the illithids, however, they soon after became aware of the gods.

Early githzerai did not reject the gods so much as wait, listen, and watch. Githzerai trust must be earned, even if one is a deity. Further, the githzerai who migrated to the Elemental Chaos were far removed from the Astral Sea and its deities. As the githzerai formed a society based on personal merit and responsibility, religion naturally took its place as an individual choice. Those with divine revelation spread the word, forming small sects dedicated to deities that reflected the githzerai tendencies toward self-reflection, knowledge, and personal betterment.

Deities

In selecting patron deities, githzerai resist extremes. Individuals and small groups favor Ioun, Kord, and Erathis, since these deities best represent githzerai ideals. Among these, Ioun is most respected, with Kord a close second. Githzerai value arcane magic, and they see Ioun as its true patron, avoiding Corellon's fey passions. Kord is the ideal githzerai battle god, reflecting the roiling of the Elemental Chaos in his fiery spirit. He encourages his followers to use personal judgment rather than arbitrary moral codes to determine courses of action. Erathis represents the taming of chaos, much like the internal githzerai struggle, as well as the efforts of a united people.

More githzerai respect Ioun's exarch Zuoken than actually worship Ioun or any other deity. Zuoken was once a powerful human monk and psionicist. He gained perfect harmony of body, mind, and spirit through knowledge, meditation, skill, and decisive action. In so doing, he attained immortality, something members of many races strive to achieve. Part of Zuoken's philosophy is to transcend material appearances and attachments.

"My humanity is as immaterial to the Way as my gender or my nationality," says Zuoken, according to writings. This philosophy gives githzerai a point of departure for dealing and working with other peoples when their isolationist tendencies might otherwise hinder such interactions. Because those who admire Zuoken can be found among many races and cultures, the githzerai respect for Zuoken often gives them common ground among these groups.

Spirits

Githzerai respect their ancestors, and they esteem the spirits around them. This latter point is especially true in worldly githzerai holdings. Such settlements are usually located in rugged and remote places, and each has a place that honors deceased githzerai.

While meditating in hidden glades or other places of pristine natural beauty, or even in ancient githzerai shrines, numerous githzerai hear the whispers of the primal spirits, ancestral or otherwise. Some take more than inspiration from this communion. They tap into the primal power of the world to become better instruments for self-exploration and the defense of their people.

Among the githzerai, Zerthimon is considered to be the greatest of the departed ancestors. Those who evoke the spirits or divine power use Zerthimon's name often for guidance and inspiration. Githzerai legend holds that Zerthimon meditates forever within the realm of the spirits, marshalling his people toward greatness with his visions. Some say he might return one day, in the form of a mighty spirit, to lead the githzerai.

Zerths

Within githzerai culture, zerths are those who mix arcane arts with other skills and powers—particularly martial or psionic ones. These githzerai follow the example of Zerthimon, even if they do so unintentionally. Any githzerai who multiclasses or hybrids an arcane class with a non-arcane class can claim the honorific "zerth." However, it is considered presumptuous to do so until other githzerai, other zerths especially, have recognized a would-be zerth's prowess. Such recognition rarely occurs before a githzerai has proven him or herself worthy with success on a few challenging ventures.

Among githzerai, zerths are the philosophical offspring of Zerthimon. For this reason, most zerths pay at least some honor to Zerthimon. Some githzerai, zerths and otherwise, believe that when Zerthimon returns the zerths will be his preferred assistants.

Backgrounds

A githzerai character can choose one or both of these background elements.

Primal Cloister: The githzerai settlement you grew up in was located in an unblemished wilderness where the primal spirits were strong and vocal. Primal power was common among your elders, and honor for githzerai ancestors was plentiful. Although you no longer live in this place since you set out on your adventures, how did it influence your life? Do you dislike civilization, or do you see it as another of nature's expressions? How do you now regard the spirits? Do you expect others to do the same?

Associated Skills: Nature, Endurance

Otherworldly Victim: Once, you had a home in a secure githzerai monastery or fort, but something brought the attention of hostile aberrant or elemental creatures to your doorstep. Was your home destroyed, or were you exiled because of suspected involvement in the incursion? How did you survive the raid and the aftermath? Are you hunted even now? How do feel about those who invaded your home and those you might have left behind or lost?

Associated Skills: Dungeoneering, Stealth

Adventurers

Two sample githzerai adventurers are described below.

Janin grew up in a monastery in the world. There, he learned the teachings of Zerthimon and Zuoken, the ways of his people, and the precepts of Ioun and Kord. An able-bodied youth, he dedicated his mind to knowledge and his body to combat, tempering his soul with genuine piety. As he honed his skills, he became more and more devoted to Ioun. He came to see her teachings as embodiments of all the other philosophies he learned. To Janin, Zerthimon's philosophy of knowing oneself, seeking the truest and most valuable knowledge, seemed directly inspired by Ioun. Janin left the monastic life to take up the mantle of Ioun's avenger, making sure none are denied true knowledge and the freedom it offers. He hopes to one day hold discourse with Zuoken as an equal of the great master in Ioun's astral dominion.

Markha is a githzerai druid who ferrets out and destroys aberrant creatures in the world and the planes. When she was young, she lived in the Elemental Chaos in Zerthadlun. Her parents maintained portals in the great githzerai city, connecting far-flung gith outposts to the center of githzerai civilization. From one of these, Markha heard whispers that tugged at a place deep in her heart. As a child, she had no fear and went trough the gate before she could be stopped. On the other side, she found an elderly githzerai who gazed at her with placid eyes. Markha saw the spirits that danced and played around the ancient one, but before she could speak, the old githzerai struck her down with his staff. In anger, she instinctively drew on the power of the world and summoned serpentine spirits, transformed into a sleek, drakelike creature, and leapt. The old one—whom she would come to know as Vann as her druid training proceeded—easily deflected her attack and said, "Welcome, little Markha. I had hoped you'd hear the whispers of the spirits sooner. But it seems they did not lie about you. Let us not dwell on your tardiness, and let your initiation into the ways of the spirits begin."

Feats

Githzerai study techniques that involve mental toughness, adaptive movement, and internal harmony. The feats in this section reflect this way of life. They also offer ways to enhance a variety of githzerai character concepts.

Heroic Tier Feats

These feats are available to any githzerai character who meets the prerequisites.

Avenger's Fortunes

Prerequisite: Githzerai, avenger

Benefit: Whenever you spend a healing surge, you can shift 1 square as a free action. If you have an *oath of enmity* target, this shift must take you closer to or into a square adjacent to that target.

Covenant Shifting

Prerequisite: Githzerai, invoker

Benefit: When you push, pull, or slide a target with a divine power, you can add 1 square to that forced movement.

Fortune's Predator

Prerequisite: Githzerai, druid, Primal Predator class feature

Benefit: When you use *wild shape* to change from your beast form to your humanoid form, you can shift 2 squares instead of 1.

Githzerai Beast Mastery

Prerequisite: Githzerai, Beast Mastery class feature

Benefit: Your beast companion gains a +2 bonus to saving throws against the dazed, dominated, and stunned conditions. When you use your second wind, your beast companion can shift 3 squares as a free action.

Githzerai Blade Master

Prerequisite: Githzerai

Benefit: You gain proficiency with all military heavy blades, as well as the bastard sword and the fullblade. Additionally, you gain a +2 feat bonus to damage rolls with these weapons. This bonus increases to +3 at 11th level and +4 at 21st level.

Marked Fortunes

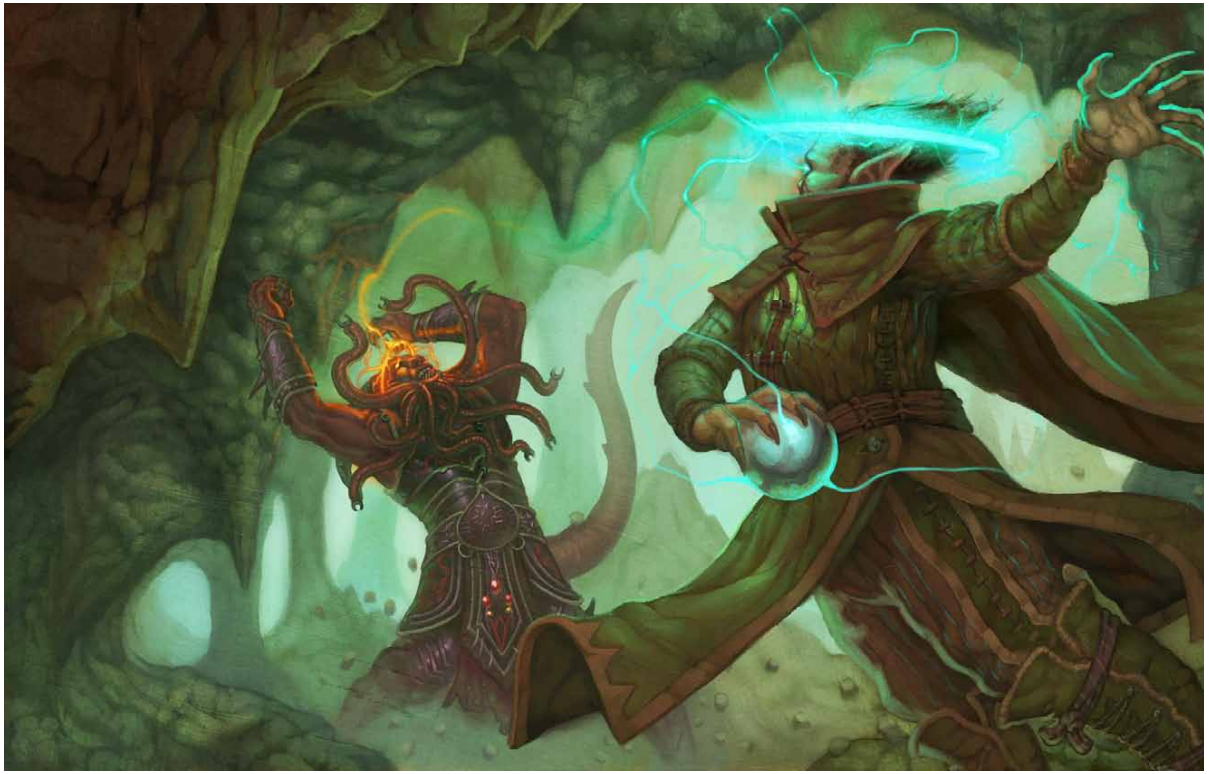
Prerequisite: Githzerai, defender role

Benefit: When you use Shifting Fortunes to shift, you can mark each enemy adjacent to you at the end of your shift.

Iron Retreat

Prerequisite: Githzerai, *iron mind* racial power, controller role

Benefit: When you use *iron mind*, you can shift 2 squares after the action that triggered it is resolved and, until the end of your next turn, you can shift 1 square as a free action each time an enemy hits you with an attack.



Iron Riposte

Prerequisite: Githzerai, *iron mind* racial power, rogue

Benefit: When you use *iron mind*, you gain combat advantage against the triggering attacker until the end of your next turn.

Marked With Iron

Prerequisite: Githzerai, *iron mind* racial power, Wis 13, defender role

Benefit: When you use *iron mind*, targets marked by you take an additional penalty to attack rolls equal to your Wisdom modifier for any attack that doesn't include you as a target. This penalty lasts until the end of your next turn.

Shifting Spirit

Prerequisite: Githzerai, shaman

Benefit: Whenever you shift, your spirit companion can shift the same number of squares.

Paragon Tier Feats

These feats are available to any githzerai character of 11th level or higher who meets the prerequisites.

Energy Transference

Prerequisite: 11th level, githzerai, *iron mind* racial power

Benefit: When you use *iron mind*, you gain resist 5 against any damage types dealt by the triggering attack until the end of your next turn. At 21st level, this resistance increases to 10.

Githzerai Healer

Prerequisite: 11th level, githzerai

Benefit: Whenever you use a healing power, each target of that power can make a saving throw with a +2 bonus against an effect that includes dazed, dominated, or stunned.

Githzerai Mobility

Prerequisite: 11th level, Wis 13, githzerai

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus to all defenses against opportunity attacks.

Tempered Iron Mind

Prerequisite: 11th level, githzerai

Benefit: Your *iron mind* racial power is a free action and can be triggered even if an attack misses you.

Zuoken's Centering

Prerequisite: 11th level, githzerai, Wis 15, monk

Benefit: Your hit points and number of healing surges are based on your Wisdom instead of Constitution. When you must make a Strength check, you can use Wisdom instead, and your Athletics checks are based on your Wisdom modifier.

Epic Tier Feats

These feats are available to any githzerai character of 21st level or higher who meets the prerequisites.

Energy Transmutation

Prerequisite: 21st level, githzerai, *iron mind* racial power

Benefit: When you use *iron mind* triggered by an attack that has a damage type keyword, you can choose cold, fire, lightning, psychic, radiant, or thunder. Until the end of your next turn, any attack you make can deal damage of the chosen type in place of any other damage type.

Ironclad Oath

Prerequisite: 21st level, githzerai, avenger, *iron mind* racial power

Benefit: When you use *iron mind*, you gain combat advantage and a bonus to damage rolls equal to your Dexterity modifier against your *oath of enmity* target until the end of your next turn.

Paragon Path

A githzerai who chooses to master his or her internal world might become a storvakal.

Storvakal

"My inner harmony puts the outer world at my service."

Prerequisite: Githzerai

Githzerai strive for inner harmony, a blending of physical capacities, knowledge, and strength of the soul. They use a variety of methods to acquire this enlightenment. Among these is a cycle of quieting the mind and then returning to physical activity.

A major aspect of the process is meditation. When the mind is allowed to naturally become still in meditation, it transcends normal mental boundaries and leaves the ego behind for blissful silence. Githzerai refer to tapping this transcendent silence as "knowing oneself." To them, this is like allowing a field to remain fallow for a season, allowing it to retain and build up the nutrients it would otherwise give away.

Returning to physical responsibilities and focused training plants seeds in the healthier soil. The body grows more in tune with the mind and the soul. Because it is nurtured in all aspects, the whole organism grows stronger.

Work and rest in such cycles bears fruit for the devotee in greater skill, greater peace of mind, and greater accord with the outer world. It is this connection of inner self and outer world that storvakals attempt to master. The storvakal has reached a milestone of personal development such that he or she can command nearby forces and expect a positive response. The storvakal's personal being also

responds to adversity more like water flowing around a hammer than a stone struck by the same instrument. Githzerai refer to this state of being as "support of nature," which garners any githzerai who has it great respect.

Such harmony and respect is yours, for your dedication has placed you on the path of the storvakal. Your serenity mixes with your formidable powers to defend you and give you focus, as well as to support your allies. Adversaries mistake your lack of histrionics for weakness at their peril. Your calm is that of the alpine lake, deep and inscrutable. Their own emotions and lack of commitment give you inroads to manipulate and defeat them.

From now on, the world around you will reorder itself to your needs in ways small and great. Minor fortunate events that seem like luck to others will prove your inner and outer accord. The limit to this support of nature is yours to determine with your dedication and deeds. As it grows, so shall your ability to accomplish anything toward which you bend your will.

Storvakal Features

Restoring Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, you can roll a saving throw against each effect on you that a save can end.

Rebalanced Mind (11th level): Reduce the total penalty you are taking to your attack rolls, skill checks, or ability checks by 2.

Mind Bar (16th level): You gain a +2 bonus to all defenses against charm, fear, and psychic attacks.

Storvakal Powers

Probability Travel — Storvakal Attack 11

You see all the possibilities and choose one, and the minds of your enemies reel from the sudden changes.

Encounter ✦ Psionic, Psychic, Teleportation
Standard Action **Close** blast 5
Target: Each enemy in blast
Attack: Your highest ability modifier + 4 vs. Will
Level 21: Your highest ability modifier + 6 vs. Will
Hit: 3d10 + your highest ability modifier psychic damage, and you teleport the target a number of squares equal to 1 + your Wisdom modifier.
Effect: Each ally in the area can teleport a number of squares equal to your Wisdom modifier.

Wind of Reprisal — Storvakal Utility 12

Riding a psychic connection created from your enemy's wrath, you teleport closer to your attacker and send a projectile intended for you at another target.

Daily ✦ Psionic, Teleportation
Immediate Interrupt **Personal**
Trigger: An enemy misses you with a ranged attack
Effect: The attacking creature rerolls the attack against a creature of your choice within 5 squares of you. You then teleport up to 5 squares plus a number of squares equal to your Wisdom modifier, as long as you arrive in a square within 5 squares of the triggering enemy.

Excoriating Strands — Storvakal Attack 20

Tapping into your knowledge of balance, and tapping into insecurities, you unleash coruscating arcs of brilliant energy that strip your foes of their most reliable defenses.

Daily ✦ Psionic, Psychic
Standard Action **Close** burst 2
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Your highest ability modifier + 6 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d10 + your highest ability modifier psychic damage, and the target loses all resistances and immunities (save ends). This damage ignores resist psychic and insubstantial.
Aftereffect: The target loses all resistances and immunities (save ends).
Miss: Half damage, and the target loses all resistances and immunities (save ends). This damage ignores resist psychic and insubstantial.

About the Author

Chris Sims coexists with the slaads and ventures to the world to war on the githyanki. His vendetta is curious, since he, like the githyanki, was released from mind flayer bondage under the leadership of Gith. Yet the war is vicious and long enduring. Chris is slightly weaker than githyanki, but his versatility as a member of the D&D Insider team and a D&D designer appears to compensate. He shares a secret monastic fortress with his wife in the primal wilds of the Seattle exurb of Covington.

FORGOTTEN REALMS®

Explore Airspur:

Agents and Enemies

By Brian Cortijo
illustration by David Hammond and Shane Watson - Empty Room Studio
cartography by Sean Macdonald

All manner of interesting folk fill the streets and motes of Airspur. Among these folk are the genasi, and a myriad other races wander the roads and flying bridges of the city as well, if in lesser numbers. As with any city, one can find soldiers and merchants, criminals and adventurers. No matter how experienced a party of heroes might be when they first encounter the wondrous capital of Akanûl, the PCs can find adventure in Airspur if they look for it.

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The city of Airspur
N
W
E
S
1. Court of Majesty
2. Street of Cerulean Hues
3. Darkled Depths
4. Plaza of Leaping Fountains
5. The Catacombs
6. Drakeyards
7. Motherhouse
8. Akanûl Courthouses
9. Cliff Prison
10. Akanawater Falls
Distance in Feet
0
1,000

This article references locations on the Airspur city map. See "Airspur: Brightest of the Fallen Stars" in *Dragon*® #377 for more information about the city.

Chevesh	**Level 15 Elite Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid (fire), human	XP 2,400
Initiative +8	**Senses** Perception +10
HP 228; **Bloodied** 114	
AC 27; **Fortitude** 25; **Reflex** 28; **Will** 28	
Resist 15 fire	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 6	
Action Points 1	
Flame Dagger (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire, Weapon**	
+20 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage plus 2d8 fire damage.	
Flame Missile (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire, Implement**	
Ranged 20; +20 vs. Reflex; 3d4 + 7 fire damage.	
Missile Flurry (standard; at-will)	
Chevesh makes two *flame missile* attacks.	
Lances of Flame (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅)	
Close blast 5; targets enemies; +18 vs. Reflex; 4d6 + 6 fire damage, and Chevesh pushes the target 4 squares.	
Prismatic Beams (standard; encounter) ✦ **Fire, Poison**	
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +18 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 7 poison damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends). *Effect:* Chevesh makes a secondary attack. *Secondary Attack:* Close burst 5; targets enemies; +18 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 7 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).	
Body of Flame (free when a creature hits Chevesh with a melee attack; at-will)	
The triggering creature takes 10 fire damage.	
Blur (minor; encounter) ✦ **Illusion**	
Enemies 5 or more squares away from Chevesh cannot see him. *Sustain Minor:* The effect persists.	
Displacement (immediate interrupt, when an attack hits Chevesh; encounter) ✦ **Illusion**	
The attacker must reroll the attack.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Primordial
Skills Arcana +18, Dungeoneering +15	
Str 14 (+9)	**Dex** 12 (+8) **Wis** 16 (+10)
Con 18 (+11)	**Int** 22 (+13) **Cha** 13 (+8)
Equipment dagger, wand	

Chevesh, Flame Mage

Nestled among the buildings on the southern cliff-shore of the city is the home of Chevesh, a wandering (and more than slightly insane) fire mage who settled in Airspur nearly a decade ago. Rumors fly that he is centuries old, and these tales detail different sources for his madness: Some believe he was driven mad by the Spellplague, while others whisper that he was among those unfortunate humans that was not revealed to be a genasi when Calimshan fell into its ages old civil war.

Whatever the truth of his origins, Chevesh now spends his days in his laboratory, experimenting with magic beyond even his understanding. Long fascinated with genasi and their connection to elemental forces, Chevesh has tried several times—and failed—to develop rituals that will transform him fully into a member of that race. Some of these attempts have resulted in "improvements" to his form, but he has reached the point where testing new magic has become dangerous. As a result, he secretly obtains nongenasi inmates from the nearby prison as "volunteers" for his experiments.

Among the organizations within Akanûl, Chevesh has concern only for the Firestorm Cabal, whose investigations into plaguechanged creatures comes dangerously close to interfering with his own research.

Tactics

Chevesh's insanity in no way hampers his effectiveness in combat. When threatened, he opens an encounter with *missile flurry*. He reserves his *prismatic beams* for a moment when he can affect the maximum number of targets.

Encounter Group

Although Chevesh works alone, he contacts creatures with a connection to fire, and others might find him during one of his negotiations with such creatures.

Level 15 Encounter (XP 6,500)
✦ Chevesh (level 15 elite artillery)
✦ 2 azer footsoldiers (level 14 soldier; *Monster Manual*, page 22)
✦ 1 azer taskmaster (level 16 controller; *Monster Manual*, page 23)
✦ 2 azer warriors (level 16 minion; *Monster Manual*, page 22)

Hook: Introducing Chevesh

To help you introduce a reclusive mage such as Chevesh as a villain in your campaign, we have a few hooks below that might assist you.

✦ The PCs track a shipment of prisoners, exotic ritual components, or *residuum* to Chevesh's home.

✦ The PCs encounter an escaped test subject running from Chevesh's laboratory, screaming in agony before being consumed by flame from within her.

✦ An enemy that the PCs slew in a previous encounter turns out to be a former subject that Chevesh was observing. Chevesh trails and confronts the PCs about their interference.

✦ The Firestorm Cabal reaches out to the PCs, pointing out Chevesh as a threat that must be eliminated—but with which the Cabal is not equipped to deal.

Naibur Tinok, Servant of Shadow

The savagely enthusiastic swordmage called Naibur Tinok is the leader of a small group of Netherese agents within Airspur. Their duties are separate from those agents that directly operate from the embassy. While the official servants of Netheril work to advance trade and diplomatic relations within Akanûl, Tinok and his band operate in the shadows, looking to eliminate potential threats to Netherese interests among the genasi.

More than anything, Tinok craves transformation into a shade in Netheril's service. Naturally pale, he dyes his hair black and dresses in dark hues, emulating the style and mannerisms of the shadar-kai—so much so that many observers cannot tell that Naibur is truly human. Although Prince Rivalen has offered to transform him into a shadar-kai, the swordmage has politely declined, preferring to wait until he has earned the elevated status of a true shade, and is invited to learn the secrets of the Netherese umbriri (*Forgotten Realms® Player's Guide*, page 67).

Tactics

Despite his formidable combat abilities, Naibur prefers to strike in ambush, taking his targets by surprise and eliminating the opportunity for them to plan a counterassault. Once he engages his foes, the swordmage attempts to set up flanking opportunities for his allies, while maintaining the mark from his *aegis of ensnarement* on the nearest defender among the PCs. If the combat becomes tense, or his allies fail to take advantage of his maneuvering, Naibur uses his *shadowstride* to leave the thick of combat, escaping if he feels that the situation can't be salvaged.

Encounter Group

As the leader of the small cadre of Netherese agents inside Airspur, Naibur can expect to call on them in times of conflict. Although he prefers to work alone, the capable swordmage is more than willing to accept the help of other servants of Netheril should the need arise.

Level 8 Encounter (XP 1,750)

✦ Naibur Tinok (level 7 elite soldier)

✦ 1 shadar-kai chainfighter (level 6 skirmisher; *Monster Manual*, page 230)

✦ 1 shadar-kai gloomblade (level 6 lurker; *Monster Manual*, page 230)

✦ 1 shadar-kai warrior (level 8 soldier; *Monster Manual*, page 231)

✦ 1 shadar-kai witch (level 7 controller; *Monster Manual*, page 231)

Naibur Tinok		**Level 7 Elite Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, human		XP 600
Initiative +5	**Senses** Perception +9	
HP 156; **Bloodied** 78		
AC 23; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 20		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 6		
Action Points 1		
ⓐ **Acidic Slash** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Acid, Weapon**		
+14 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 acid damage.		
⸸ **Corrosive Splash** (standard; at will)		
Naibur makes two *acidic slash* attacks. If either hits, Naibur deals 3 points of acid damage to each enemy adjacent to him that he did not hit.		
⸸ **Enervating Slash** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Weapon**		
+14 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 4 damage. *Miss:* Half damage. *Effect:* The target is weakened (save ends).		
⚡ **Lightning Blade** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Lightning, Weapon**		
Close burst 2; targets enemies; +10 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 4 lightning damage.		
⚡ **Aegis of Ensnarement** (minor; at-will) ✦ **Teleportation**		
Close burst 2; targets one enemy in burst; no attack roll; the target is marked until Naibur marks another target with this power. If a target marked by this power is within 10 squares of Naibur when it hits with an attack that does not include him as a target, Naibur can use an immediate reaction after the target's entire attack is resolved to teleport the target to any space adjacent to him. In addition, the target grants combat advantage to all creatures until the end of Naibur's next turn.		
Shadowstride (move; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Illusion, Teleportation**		
Naibur teleports 6 squares and is invisible until the start of his next turn.		
Skills Arcana +12, Diplomacy +9, History +12		
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common, Netherese, Primordial	
Str 16 (+6)	**Dex** 10 (+3)	**Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 14 (+5)	**Int** 19 (+7)	**Cha** 13 (+4)
Equipment leather armor, bastard sword		

Rilta of the Rooftops

Bounding across rooftops and through the clouds themselves is Rilta, the bold and skilled burglar that makes a living stealing from Airspur's elite and wealthy visitors to the city. Although not malicious about her targets—or the wealth she takes from them—Rilta is nonetheless a proud and somewhat greedy thief who bristles at the thought of being embarrassed or beaten to a score.

Eager to take on any assignment as long as she can avoid direct violence, Rilta has spent years developing her powers of flight. She uses her *cloud hop* ability to leap off the edge of the cliffs or earthmotes of Airspur, floating harmlessly down to one of its lower surfaces to hide among the city's buildings. Rilta is a shrewd thief and is familiar enough with the weather patterns over the Akanawater to know when her attempts will merely evade pursuers, and when she will be entirely concealed by shifting cloud cover, mists, and other obstructions.

Tactics

Rilta fights for survival rather than for glory or for the rush of violence. If forced to fight at all, she prefers to knock her opponents out rather than slaying them. The moment a combat appears to turn against her, Rilta uses her *evasive flip* to avoid her attackers, and then *cloud hop* to escape. She retains her action point so that she can use an extra move action to aid in evading her enemies.

Nether-who?

Fans of the Forgotten Realms can recognize Netheril and its plots, but newcomers or those who want to insert Naibur and his plots into non-Forgotten Realms campaigns might not have this knowledge. A primer on Netheril follows.

Netheril was an ancient empire driven by magic, and a disruption of magic brought it low when one of its archmages usurped the mantle of Mystryl, goddess of magic. A little more than a century ago, one of Netheril's flying cities returned from the planes and began rebuilding the empire. Now, Netheril and its rulers—the powerful, shadow-infused Princes of Shade—seek dominion over all the empire's former lands, as well as many countries that were never part of that vast and sprawling realm. Sembia was the first to fall to Netheril's influence, but the Princes seek nothing less than total rule—or at the very least, influence—over the entire continent.

As a result, Netherese agents work in the capitals and major cities of countless realms, pushing the empire's interests and quietly dispatching its enemies. Humans, shadar-kai, and the favored shades (*Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide*, page 260) work to quietly subvert those who would oppose them.

Any expansionist, magically powerful kingdom or empire can serve in place of Netheril; a strong connection to the Shadowfell is helpful, but by no means necessary.

For those interested, more information about the Netherese empire can be found in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide*.

Tanris

Across Airspur, the merchant Crerorm, the traveling porter Queyh of Calimport, and the rumormonger Inakin are all known, if seldom mentioned. These people all are Tanris, in different guises and under different names, plying his trade among an unsuspecting populace.

Tanris is the faceless head of a nameless crime organization. None know his original name or his motivation for causing such tumult in Airspur; they know that some folks go missing, some nobles suddenly become suspiciously silent, and certain merchants have unforeseen troubles making simple purchases. It is Tanris that causes these troubles.

Tanris was born a stormsoul genasi, but he has taken great pains to conceal his nature beneath the guise of a windsoul. Only when angered, threatened, or insulted does the stormsoul portion of his being manifest, beginning as crackling lightning that runs up and down his *szuldar* (the energy lines that mark the faces of all genasi) and culminating with the sudden emergence of crystalline growths that clearly mark him as a stormsoul.

The primary business of Tanris's enterprise is smuggling, and he has a series of warehouses across Airspur that he uses for that purpose. Tanris can also—for the appropriate price—be contracted for kidnapping, blackmail, intimidation, or fencing stolen goods. He refers any requests for burglaries to the

An Unexpected Ally?

Rilta is a good way to introduce a bit of ambiguity into an ongoing campaign. Although she works perfectly well as an enemy to be encountered and defeated, Rilta is best used as a sometimes-ally to the PCs, occasionally working with them, while at other times treating them as rivals or outright enemies.

No matter how long the players interact with Rilta, a big enough score might come along and she might choose to turn on them. Although she doesn't attack them outright, it's not above the young thief to leave her former allies in a dangerous situation.

Hooks to employ Rilta in a campaign include the following:

✦ Having Rilta work together with the party for a few missions, aiding them as an advance scout to gain their trust so that she can use them as a distraction to obtain an item she wishes to steal.

✦ After a short time as uneasy allies, Rilta and the PCs take missions to recover the same object. The party arrives at the location of the object, only to find that Rilta is already escaping with the loot, and they need to track her down to complete their quest.

✦ Rilta has failed in one of her missions for the dangerous crime lord Tanris, and the party needs to find her and bring Tanris proof of her death before he sends his goons after them.

✦ Trapped in an untenable situation, the PCs receive unexpected aid from Rilta, only to have her cash in the favor by requesting their help on a dangerous mission.

Rilta can also act as a replacement for a rogue or other striker PC that dies in the course of a campaign. Rather than having the player introduce an entirely new character, Rilta's dealings with the party provide a plausible introduction—have the player create a windsoul genasi rogue (the aerialist rogue build from *Martial Power*™ is a good fit) of the party's level, and off you go!

Rilta **Level 9 Elite Skirmisher**
Medium elemental humanoid (air), genasi XP 800

Initiative +10 **Senses** Perception +10
HP 188; **Bloodied** 94
AC 23; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22
Saving Throws +2
Resist 5 cold
Speed 6; see also *cloud hop*
Action Points 1

Short Sword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Cold, Weapon**
+14 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage plus 1d6 cold damage, and Rilta shifts 2 squares.

Thrown Dagger (standard; at will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 10; +14 vs. AC; 2d4 + 5 damage, and the target cannot make opportunity attacks until the end of Rilta's next turn.

Swiftwind Stride (standard; at-will)
Rilta makes two basic attacks.

Steel Whirlwind (standard; encounter) ✦ **Weapon**
Close burst 2; targets enemies; +12 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 5 damage, and Rilta pushes the target 1 square and knocks it prone.

Knockout Blow (standard; encounter) ✦ **Weapon**
+12 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 4 damage and the target is knocked unconscious (save ends). *Miss:* Half damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Evasive Flip (immediate reaction, when a creature flanks Rilta; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Weapon**
Rilta shifts 2 squares, which can move her through occupied squares. At the end of her movement, Rilta deals 4 damage to an adjacent enemy.

Cloud Hop (minor; recharge ⚄ ⚅)
Until the end of her turn, Rilta gains fly 6 and can hover. If Rilta ends her turn without landing, she floats harmlessly to the ground.

Combat Advantage
Rilta deals 2d6 extra damage against any target granting combat advantage to her.

First Strike
Rilta has combat advantage against any enemy that has not yet acted in the encounter.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Primordial
Skills Acrobatics +12, Stealth +12, Thievery +12
Str 11 (+4) **Dex** 19 (+8) **Wis** 12 (+5)
Con 14 (+6) **Int** 13 (+5) **Cha** 18 (+8)
Equipment leather armor, 2 short swords, 6 daggers

thief, Rilta, though the young genasi has no idea from where such referrals originally stem.

Tactics

In combat, Tanris's priority is survival, not vengeance, and so he attempts to avoid damage rather than dealing it out himself. He makes liberal use of his *near or far* and *by the throat* powers, reserving his *rising storm* for when the battle turns against him and he tries to make an escape.

Encounter Group

Tanris has a number of minor genasi criminals within his enterprise. When encountered, his trio of loyal bodyguards and the watersoul genasi mage he employs for protection surround him. The crime lord grabs an enemy at the nearest opportunity, punishing that character while his associates deal with the other PCs.

Level 11 Encounter (XP 3,250)
✦ 1 genasi hydromancer (level 8 controller; *Monster Manual 2*, page 117)
✦ 3 genasi stoneshields (level 10 soldier; *Monster Manual 2*, page 117)
✦ Tanris (level 12 elite lurker)

Tanris **Level 12 Elite Lurker**
Medium elemental humanoid (air, water), genasi XP 1,400

Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +8
HP 184; **Bloodied** 92
AC 26; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 24
Saving Throws +2
Resist 5 lightning
Speed 6
Action Points 1

Dagger (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+17 vs. AC; 1d4 + 5 damage.

Thrown Dagger (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 10; +17 vs. AC; 1d4 + 5 damage.

Near or Far (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Tanris makes two basic attacks.

By the Throat (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+17 vs. AC; 1d4 + 5 damage, and the target is grabbed and takes a -2 penalty to escape checks to escape the grab.

Close Shave (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Targets one creature grabbed by Tanris; +17 vs. AC; 3d6 + 5 damage.

Before You Go (free action, when an enemy grabbed by Tanris escapes; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Targets the escaping enemy; +17 vs. AC; 2d4 + 5 damage.

Rising Storm (minor; encounter) ✦ **Lightning**
Close burst 2; +14 vs. Reflex; 2d10 lightning damage.
Effect: Tanris gains fly 6 until the end of his next turn.

Body Shield (opportunity, when an enemy hits or misses Tanris; must be grabbing a creature; at-will)
Tanris takes only half damage from the hit, and the grabbed creature takes the rest. If the attack misses and deals damage on a miss, Tanris takes no damage and the grabbed enemy takes all the damage from the attack.

Combat Advantage
Tanris deals 1d6 extra damage against any target granting combat advantage to him.

Skills Bluff +11, Insight +13, Stealth +16
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Primordial
Str 15 (+8) **Dex** 20 (+11) **Wis** 14 (+8)
Con 14 (+8) **Int** 16 (+9) **Cha** 10 (+6)
Equipment leather armor, 12 daggers

Lairs and Threats

Not all threats to Airspur walk the streets openly; at times, one must go looking for them.

Aboleth Den

Rumors persist of aboleth dens hidden among the waves and rocks beneath the cliff faces that make up the twin shores of Airspur. These areas are remnants of the war with the Abolethic Sovereignty half a century ago. Unfortunately, not only do these rumors hold truth, but one such den lurks close to the Akanawater Falls. None know for sure that these aboleths exist, in part because the caves that harbor them are so well-hidden, and in part because those few genasi that have braved the caverns were transformed into the horrific creatures that now serve the aboleths.

None know whether the aboleths and their servitors are the advance force of another assault by the Sovereignty, exiles from that fell kingdom, or aboleths that resided on Toril even before the return of Abeir. What is certain is that none want to find out.

Level 17 Encounter (XP 9,850)
✦ 1 aboleth lasher (level 17 brute; *Monster Manual*, page 8)
✦ 1 aboleth overseer (level 18 elite controller; *Monster Manual*, page 8)
✦ 5 aboleth servitors (level 16 minion; *Monster Manual*, page 9)
✦ 5 abolethic skum (level 18 minion brute; *Monster Manual 2*, page 172)

Netherese Agents

Naibur Tinok and his band patrol the city, but a great many citizens of Netheril serve their nation openly as guards, scribes, and spies within and near the embassy (which rests on the large central island adjacent to the city's courthouses). Given the propensity of the Netherese to cause trouble whenever they gather in large numbers, and the almost pathological need for PCs to meddle in the affairs of shadowy kingdoms, finding a way to introduce these agents as an obstacle to the party isn't difficult. Perhaps the PCs are finding an item, creature, or person that the Princes of the Empire would like brought home for study, so the groups clash.

Alternatively, these agents might serve as a preliminary threat to the PCs, as they uncover the plots of Naibur Tinok against the interests of Airspur. An arc wherein the players confront Naibur after a few levels of dealing with his minions and allies could be a strong ongoing threat for mid-heroic-level PCs.

Level 4 Encounter (XP 900)
✦ 2 human bandits (level 2 skirmisher; *Monster Manual*, page 162)
✦ 1 human berserker (level 4 brute; *Monster Manual*, page 163)
✦ 2 human guards (level 3 soldier; *Monster Manual*, page 162)
✦ 1 human mage (level 4 artillery; *Monster Manual*, page 163)

Tanris's Warehouse

Despite having no name, Tanris's criminal enterprise has a highly organized structure, with warehouses around the city for smuggling of goods, hiding fugitives, and keeping kidnapped or killed victims until they can be properly disposed. Tanris is not thoroughly involved in the dealings of some of these warehouses, preferring to keep out of the daily operations of those of his employees he can trust to make him coin.

Tanris keeps his most capable "workers" just outside the city, farther along the shore. This allows him to store his most sensitive materiel without being noticed by authorities—and to keep the number of prying eyes and ears quiet when the inevitable conflict (and the ensuing cries of battle) erupts.

Level 10 Encounter (XP 2,950)
✦ 1 dragonborn gladiator (level 10 soldier; *Monster Manual*, page 86)
✦ 1 drow warrior (level 11 lurker; *Monster Manual*, page 94)
✦ 1 duergar hellcaller (level 12 artillery; *Monster Manual 2*, page 94)
✦ 1 gnome wolverine (level 9 skirmisher; *Monster Manual 2*, page 129)
✦ 5 ogre thugs (level 11 minion; *Monster Manual*, page 198)

About the Author
Brian Cortijo is a freelance designer and full-time university lackey—which means he looks at the college equivalent of character sheets all day. He's undergoing a homecoming of sorts, making his return to the Forgotten Realms® setting (since *Dragon* #358) after short hiatus on other worlds, including an extended stay in his birth-city of New York. Some of his recent works include *Forgotten Heroes: Scythe and Shroud* and *Qadira: Gateway to the East*.

Magic Items Sets

BY LOGAN BONNER AND PETER SCHAEFER

Logan: Back in 3rd Edition, magic item sets waited to make their debut until *Magic Item Compendium*. As one of the editors on that book, I was pretty familiar with that system and wanted to bring it forward to 4E largely unchanged. (And let me tell you, nothing gives you a sense of accomplishment like finishing a book with over 1,000 items, all in a new format, and the tables to go with them!) Since *MIC* was one of the latter 3.5 products, we were already bringing in concepts that would become the default in the new edition, and much of the design was done with the same mindset. You can see item levels, better-defined slots for items, and ways to combine stat boosters with other items so you didn't give up your cool trinkets just to get a better bonus. Magic items sets as they appeared there were pretty simple: the more items you collect, the more benefits you can use. And now it's pretty much the same.

Peter: When the magic item sets from *Adventurer's Vault 2* hit development, I found they were pretty simple. Each item set we received from design included a small collection of standard items that followed a specific theme or story, connected to a group of two or three set benefits.

Finalizing the basic structure of an item set took a discussion or three. At first we had item sets that were five levels in a row, sets that hit every other level and spanned ten levels, and sets that were a mish-mash of just two levels or so. We approached the level spread primarily as a matter of acquisition. If all five items in a set were items of the same level, it would take one player five levels of play to acquire them all (assuming standard treasure distribution). He or she would first get a level n+4 item (n being equal to the character's level), then n+3, and so on, until the last item was obtained at a level equal to the character. It was a little too predictable. Acquisition was less troublesome for group item sets.

If the items were spread across ten levels, it slowed the acquisition too much. You could get your first item at level 8 and not expect the fifth until level 18.

If the items were spread across ten levels, it slowed the acquisition too much. You could get your first item at level 8 and not expect the fifth until level 18. That's a lot of game time, and months or more of play in real time for many groups. We wanted it to be more feasible for a PC to start tracking these items down, and to look forward to the next piece of the set. That made the five-item, five-level set ideal: It didn't define a timeline as strongly as either of the others, and it fit our sense of how long an item set should be useful for a character.

The last hurdle for item set levels was putting the individual items at the correct levels. With the designer looking at an overall item set, choosing a spread of five levels, and then placing items within that spread, it became easy to overlook what an items' level really means. Weapons, implements, armor, and neck-slot items are especially finicky about their levels, and the extreme example of that was the occasional such item found in a slot at level 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, or 26. Such items compete with the standard *+1 magic blank*—and almost always beat the pants off them, because we want them to be more interesting than the level allows. So we need them to be at different levels, or be very weak. To make such sets work, we either had to change the item, shift the item set's level range up or down, or, more frequently, shift item levels around so that another type of item took up that spot in the level spread.

Weapons and their iterating ilk added another factor: They repeat every five levels after they first appear. At first, the weapons and such that were attached to sets didn't repeat. This was the first thing we needed to change for the same reason we needed to keep to standard power levels: Each item in a set

needs to be perfectly normal when taken out of context, and a sword that doesn't iterate isn't normal. Each item needed to be a magic item first, and part of a set second. Once we established that a weapon in a set repeats like every other magic weapon, we came to the useful conclusion that an iterating item's location in the level spread impacted the set's duration of usefulness. Putting the armor and sword at the lowest levels means that you get them first, then get the gloves, boots, and crown (for example), and by that point you're a few levels higher and can start collecting the higher-level versions of the armor and sword, extending the number of levels you use the set.

Logan: More magic items in 4th Edition are character-specific than they were before, and some of the item sets take advantage of that. The Shadowdancer's Garb has benefits for stealthy rogues, and the Golden Lion's Battle Regalia helps barbarians, for example. Some of these started as a story concept that just naturally fit a class, and others were built so that a class that seemed like it should have an item set got one. The Gadgeteer's Garb and Tinkerer's Inventions both fit the artificer, because that class's flavor really demands cool magic items.

Other sets were more "top-down" designs—ones that started with a story that led to the mechanics. The best items blur their history. Can you tell whether the Relics of Creation started as a neat story idea that became an invoker set, or if we wanted an epic, invoker-themed set of items that picked up that story later on? In Rob Heinsoo's outline (see the table below), we see some of the varieties:

Item Set Power

Logan: So one of the obvious questions we had to answer was, "Should items in sets be worse than standard items?" The argument for making them worse says that since you get extra benefits for collecting several of them, you're getting a power-up on top of your items, so the base items should be a little weaker to keep a PC from being more powerful than expected. The counter-argument is that, for one thing, the PC had to go through extra effort to get these items and (presumably) made it a part of the ongoing campaign story, so the items in a set should be better. Also, from a mechanical standpoint, these items are taking up slots that could invariably be *better* filled by a different item. Maybe equipping those item set bracers means the PC can't wear those *iron armbands of power* that he or she would like to have. I don't think there was really much debate on this in design. We wanted collecting the set to be a reward, and making the collection be a little bit better than just a random assortment of items fits the story of what sets are all about.

Peter: That each individual item was at a normal power level was key for us in development. Today, especially with *D&D Insider*, it is increasingly easy to take an individual item without any surrounding context. If a set item was made at a lower power level, it would be a punishment for anyone who wanted to pursue the set, and it would clog our magic item lists with subpar items. That line of thought led us to the final decision to make set benefits cherries on top of the individual set items' sundae.

Item Set: Theme;	**Eytan A**	**eight to ten items**	**Eytan, this set could be a mix of personal and group; it sort of makes sense to have a variety of items in the set to match the variety of courtiers/people in the court and set story**
Fey Court Item Set: second cool new theme desired by Artificer	**Bonner**	**four to six items and set story**	
Item Set: Theme; TBD	**SRM**	**four to six items and set story**	**SRM, make your choice and add it to this outline**

Group Sets

Logan: So we were bringing back sets, and we didn't see anything about the old system we wanted to change too much. Still, we needed something new to set these apart. Fourth Edition is a team game, and the interaction between different characters of different roles is crucial. It seemed only natural to create some sets that the party as a whole could benefit from.

Designing the group sets was definitely tougher than making individual sets. You have a pretty good idea what type of character you're aiming for when you design a normal set: the stealthy rogue, the charge master, the brave warlord. But the diversity of classes makes a group set a trickier puzzle to put together. It was vital that each set appeal to a broad cross-section of groups in some way. The last thing we wanted was for the group to pursue a set they liked the story of, then have one person realize there was nothing he or she could use in the entire set.

We used a few techniques to make these sets appealing to a variety of characters. First, we avoided items that were really class-specific. An item that says, "You can roll your warlock's curse damage twice and take the higher result" is too specific for these sets.

Second, we picked weapons and implements that many types of characters could use. For instance, weapons and holy symbols are better to include than rods, because there are more classes that use weapons, and consequently a better chance that somebody in a given party can use the item.

Third, we made some sets that didn't take up your major item slots. The Rings of the Akarot, for example, use a slot not a lot of people will have filled. In fact, you have two of these slots available anyway! The Fortune Stones go a step farther. They're wondrous items that don't fill a slot at all.

As another hedge against making group sets too annoying to collect, we built some flex into the set benefits. You'll notice that in most sets the number needed for the highest set benefit is lower than the number of items in the set. This way, you can collect items you want and not feel bad that you didn't get them all. Here, the Rings of the Akarot are an exception, since thematically the whole party should really wear them, and the number of rings can grow based on party size. And while we're on the topic, a lot of these items have the max benefit appear when five people wear items from the set, but if a group is smaller, DMs should feel free to reduce that! Plenty of non-group sets just use the maximum value since they only need to matter to one person.

As another hedge against making group sets too annoying to collect, we built some flex into the set benefits.

The other thresholds were important, too. It's good to feel a sense of progress, gaining more benefits as you collect the set rather than getting everything at the end. We (almost) always put a benefit at two items so you feel some progress as soon as you collect more than one item. What better way to encourage you to pick up more?

While story is important to all items sets, group sets need to be even bigger—big enough to serve as campaign arcs. The PCs might collect the Heirlooms of Mazgorax so they can slay the dragon that factors so prominently in the backstory of that set. Alternatively, the PCs could complete an entire adventure in each of the six cities mentioned in the Rings of the Akarot description!

About the Authors

Logan Bonner has worked on *D&D Miniatures*, *Forgotten Realms Player's Guide*, *Adventurer's Vault*, *Player's Handbook 2*, and *Arcane Power* in his time as a designer at Wizards of the Coast. He has designed both familiars and alchemy, encouraging people to be both social and anti-social.

Peter Schaefer retired from ruling a small European nation when Wizards of the Coast offered him real money to develop Dungeons & Dragons full time. Recent developments include *Player's Handbook 2* and *Arcane Power*.

Party Fowl

BY SHELLY MAZZANOBLE
illustrations by William O'Conner

WANTED: Unruly, unfocused, mead-loving adventuring group seeks nurturer and pugilist to complete the party. Innate knowledge of useless movie trivia and bathroom humor appreciated. Rules lawyers need not apply. Positions open IMMEDIATELY!

Never split the party. Ha! Tell that to the paladin and shaman who left us high and dry. These things happen. I get that. Groups fall apart for reasons bigger than ours. But we lost these two key members unexpectedly and almost back to back. So now when the unmarked monsters have their way with us, we'll just... uh... die?

"Can we please focus on replacing the cleric first?" Marty, who plays our bard, asked. "I'm good at my job, but I'm not Jim Bakker."

"The fighter spot needs to be filled too," Kieran, our swordmage reminded. "No offense to those of you who love from afar but I could use some back up."

This might come as a surprise, but filling vacancies in an office D&D game isn't as easy as you think. I mean, yeah, it's Wizards of the Coast. We've got more players around here than a South Beach hot spot running a Patron promotion during Spring Break. But party members aren't light bulbs. You can't just grab a replacement out of a drawer. The key to a successful game is a party that meshes. You have your habits, your inside jokes, your assigned seats. Plus, almost anyone who wants to play D&D is already playing D&D.

Or so we thought.

Because New DM won't let us play until we fill the vacancies, we used our regularly scheduled game time to discuss our options.

"I don't suppose anyone knows someone looking for a game?" I asked.

Apparently New DM did, as he had already begun scribbling names on the white board.

"Uh, excuse me," Scott said. "You keep a list of possible replacements?"

"Sure. People have approached me about playing," he said, trying to sound casual.

I wondered how many have approached him about playing a wizard.

"You mean play in *our* game or just play in general?" Marty asked.

No offense to the Wyld Stallyns but it was hard to fathom anyone longing to be part of this brood. It was kind of like longing to be on the Reno 911 police squad, or the Bad News Bears, or the... well, you get the picture.

"We're like queen size mattresses," I said.

My fellow players looked horrified.

Maybe that came out wrong. I was trying to say that this situation reminded me of the first day of college when everyone was moving into off-campus apartments and scrounging for furniture anywhere they could. You needed something to sleep on and

would pay even less regard to the mattress's origin and condition than you did the cash to purchase said mattress.

"They don't care who plays in the game—just that it's a game," I explained. "Sad."

"And gross," Scott said, moving his chair away from mine. "I can't believe you slept on a used mattress."

"Maybe they want to play in *my* game," New DM said. "Ever think of that?"

"They obviously don't read my column, " I muttered.

"You write a column?" Kieran asked.

I threw my d10 at him.

"If they can fight or heal, they're in," Marty said.

Really? It's that easy? Shouldn't it take more than a willingness to play a particular class to fit into a group? Even if you are desperate.

We agreed to review the list New DM posted.

The Funny Guy

Pros: Works on D&D as part of his every day job so has knowledge of the game. Is not currently in a D&D game. Easy to get along with.

Cons: Has a habit of derailing meetings by sticking pencil erasers up his nose or asking everyone to smell his marker and tell him if it "really smells like donkey ass or it's just him." Sometimes *he* smells like donkey ass.

The Little Sister

Pros: Read this great book called *Confessions of a Part-Time Sorceress* and really, really wants to play D&D "because everyone else does!" Possesses strong desire to succeed at any given task.

Cons: Only knowledge of D&D comes from this really great book called *Confessions of a Part-Time Sorceress.*

"Too-Many-Things-on-My-Plate" Girl

Pros: Boss wants her to learn how to play D&D. Ability to handle multiple tasks at once.

Cons: Work-a-holic. Almost didn't attend the birth of her daughter because she was on a conference call.

The D&D Overachiever

Pros: Loves D&D so much he's playing in six games inside and outside the office. Always has something interesting and homemade for lunch. Possesses strong communication skills.

Cons: Loves D&D so much he's playing in six games inside and outside the office.

The Flakey McFlakerson Guy

Pros: Always fun to have around. Well versed in D&D. Probably uses sound effects for his spells. Strong sense of loyalty.

Cons: Has a touch of the wanderlust and takes off work for long periods of time. Sometimes "takes off" mid-sentence while talking to you.

The Encyclopedia Bitchtanica Guy

Pros: Has been playing D&D for decades and therefore has a wealth of knowledge that will help us contradict New DM. (Marty would love to take a break from being our go-to answer man.) Ability to hit the ground running.

Cons: Issues more corrections than national detention system, and not all of them game related.

(Transcript from actual conversation):

Me: "So there I was, drinking a Diet Coke—"

E.B. Guy: "It was Pepsi."

"Treat them the same way HR treats all open positions." I said. "First interviews, then references, then offer a probationary role in the party.

Me: "Sure, maybe."

E.B. Guy: "Not maybe. Pizza Hut only serves Pepsi. You didn't know that?"

"I can't play with that guy," I said, much to Marty's chagrin. "I can just hear him. *Magic missile? Really? From where you're standing?* Ugh. I don't need a commentator."

The biggest perk these five possessed was that none of them were easily offended, but we whittled the field down to four candidates: Little Sister, Too-Many-Things-on-My-Plate Girl, D&D Overachiever, and Encyclopedia Bitchtanica (gasp!).

"Now what?" Scott asked.

"Treat them the same way HR treats all open positions." I said. "First interviews, then references, then

offer a probationary role in the party. After three encounters we review their performance and determine if we'd like to extend a full-time job offer."

"Great idea," Scott said, "but did you know our HR department doesn't actually fill open party slots? They're kind of focused on *real* jobs that pay *real* dollars."

Well, duh. None of us would be here if that weren't true.

"Not HR, Mr. Buzz Kill," I explained. "Us."

And there were those blank, somewhat horrified stares again.

"Okay. Me."

"Ask them what kind of tree they would be," Marty suggested. "The first one to say an aloe plant is in."

The first order of business was to let the top four know they were contenders, so I sent an email to each.

Thank you for your interest in adventuring with the Wyld Stallyns. We would like to set up an interview to discuss your roles and goals as a party member. Please contact me at your earliest convenience.

I received the following responses.

Little Sister: "I'm available anytime!"

Bitchtanica: "Are you serious? An interview?"

Overachiever: "Ha! Bring it!"

Full Plate: "I'd love to but I'm swamped today! Unless you want to interview me while I run a few reports."

First up: Little Sister. I met her in a conference room later that day.

"Why are you interested in playing D&D?" I asked.

"Well," she began, "Everyone who plays it seems to love it. On Tuesdays you all leave for two hours and it's so boring up here. And then when you come back you're all giggly and laughing and talking about how much fun you had. Who wouldn't want to be part of that?"

Good answer, I think, and I think speaks more to the game than our group. And lucky for us she doesn't know much about D&D, or she'd be hearing how we totally biffed an encounter because none of us thought to roll a Perception check before barging into the tower.

"How do you deal with challenge?"

"Well, I recently climbed Mount Rainier because every time I saw that mountain all I thought about was what the view must look like from the top."

"You know you could see a great view from the Space Needle for like $23. And you don't have to wear clamps on your shoes or eat your meals from a pouch."

"If you're into that sort of thing, sure."

"Finally, what assets can you bring to the party?"

"I make a mean mojito," she answered. "I even grow my own mint."

"Thank you for your time," I said. "We'll be in touch."

Bitchtanica is reluctant to meet with me, offering little more than "being too busy with his *real* job to be pestered about his fantasy job."

"Just email me," he said. "I'll get to it when I can."

"They don't have email in the Forgotten Realms," I said. *Duh. Is this really someone we want in charge of putting us back together?* "We can break it up into parts if you want."

He waved me off, but I snuck up on him later. I should play a rogue.

"How do you like to be rewarded after a successful adventure?" I asked him in the kitchen while he waited for his Lean Cuisine to heat up.

"How do you like to be rewarded after a successful adventure?" I asked him in the kitchen while he waited for his Lean Cuisine to heat up.

"By being left alone to count my treasure and eat my lunch."

"Describe a situation when you had to deal with a difficult person?" I asked him in the stairwell.

"You mean difficult like someone who stalks you in a stairwell?"

And finally, as he was coming out of the gym locker room I asked him "Why the Wyld Stallyns?"

"Good question," he responded. Finally some positivity from this guy. "That's a horrible name! Not to mention you keep spelling it wrong."

Thank you for your time, Bitchtanica. There will be no further questions.

The Overachiever and I happen to be carpool buddies, so I interviewed him on our way home from work.

"Why are you interested in adventuring with the Wyld Stallyns?"

"Why wouldn't I be?" he asked. "To play my favorite hobby with my favorite coworkers? Plus, I work closely with New DM. I think it will be good for our professional relationship."

I fail to see how *that* will help. Thankfully New DM and I don't have to work together. Surely one of us would end up with a pencil in the eye.

"What qualities do you think make a good PC?"

He pondered this for a moment. "Someone who is unselfish and doesn't need to take the glory all for themselves. Someone who likes working as part of a team and recognizes their strengths and weaknesses."

Do people really talk like this? Hmm... methinks New DM may have been coaching him.

"What can you bring to the Wyld Stallyns?"

"Snacks from Costco?"

"Can you get trail mix there?"

"By the trough."

"You're in."

What?! I'm a sucker for trail mix.

Full Plate wasn't kidding about interviewing her while she ran reports. She had one hand on her mouse and one banging away at a calculator, while the phone was cradled between her shoulder and cheek. She motioned me to sit down.

First things first, I made it clear that D&D does *not* involve Excel, but it does involve sitting at table. For two hours. Uninterrupted.

"But what if I have a meeting?" she asked.

"You block out your calendar so no one can schedule one," I said. "Just like the rest of us."

"She was not," he continued, "as Obi-Wan might say, a guardian of peace and justice, but rather a bloodthirsty Gungan who enjoyed nothing more than using the Force to choke hapless stormtroopers to death."

"But what if it's important?" she asked.

"Important like your party is up against a mind flayer and you're the only one who can mark it?"

"I don't know," she said. "Is that important?"

I'm certainly the last person to make judgments on someone based on their lack of knowledge about the game, but I'm beginning to think she'd rather save a spreadsheet than my life. Still, I wanted to give her the benefit of the doubt.

"So tell me, what assets can you bring to a party?"

"Has anyone ever done a Myers-Brigg test on your group? Because I'm certified to assess you."

This girl clearly has her strengths. And we shall leave her to them.

Little Sister and Overachiever were the front-runners, but they weren't in the clear yet. Although she's never played D&D, Little Sister has played the *Star Wars* RPG, and Overachiever is a D&D lothario, so it wasn't hard to find references. I sent Little Sister's former GM, Rodney Thompson, and the Overachiever's best friend and former DM an email asking things like:

Are they on time? Do they share snacks? Do they like wizards? Have they ever done anything to put the party in jeopardy or end an encounter quickly because they were in a hurry to get home and watch Project Runway?

Rodney responded right away.

She's very nice and was respectful to all of the players and showed up on time, for the most part.

The "most part" we can work with. The current group is still a bit "start-time" challenged.

"She was not," he continued, *"as Obi-Wan might say, a guardian of peace and justice, but rather a bloodthirsty Gungan who enjoyed nothing more than using the Force to choke hapless stormtroopers to death."*

That sounds exactly like the kind of fighter we need in our group.

The Overachiever got glowing marks as well.

"He is one of the most thoughtful, creative, engaged, and knowledgeable players I have ever played D&D with."

That's great, I think, but he could be the only player this guy has ever played with.

"Regarding snacks, I think he can be counted on for proportional consumption. That is, of course relative to the fact that he is a human hummingbird and, as such, needs very regular sugar intake. He shows no real disdain for wizards other than that which they bring upon themselves—"accidental" inclusion in cone spells, and so on."

Tabitha only got caught in her burst once! The Overachiever *has* been talking to New DM.

"It should also be noted that outside of his role as a D&D player, he flosses regularly."

Our new party members gleefully accepted their probationary invitations. Little Sister rolled up an eladrin paladin named Galadriel Moonshine, and The Overachiever created a kenku cleric named Holden Cawfield—who conjured an image in my mind of Heckle in a trench coat... which is weird because neither Heckle nor Holden have even been seen in such a get up.

New DM has us meet at an inn, where our favorite presumed-dead NPC, a dwarf named Kalad, introduced the group to a new potential employer. Little Sister immediately took to the roleplaying aspect of the game—a refreshing change from our last paladin, who once ditched the game because she was bored with a skill challenge. She's good too, asking lots of questions we probably would have forgotten to ask, as well as charming a hostile NPC into giving us the name of his elusive "boss." Plus she wrote everything down!

"We have a scribe!" Scott shouted.

During our first encounter, Galadriel got up close and personal with a baby behir and lost nearly all of her 60-some hit points.

"This game sucks!" she shouted. "Why is this thing picking on *me*?"

"Because you challenged it," Marty reminded her. "It will take damage it if attacks anyone else."

"Someone else should mark it," she said. "Why are you standing all the way back there?" she shouted to me. "You mark it!"

"Because Tabitha is supposed to stand back here! She's wearing robes—you're wearing 86 tons of armor!"

Holden used his turn to heal Galadriel. She shows her gratitude by double moving and ditching the poor birdman to fend for himself, and within spitting distance of the behir.

"Are you serious? Get back here!" he said. "I'm holding her by her ponytail so she can't move," he told New DM.

"Why would I stay there?" she asked, so sincere and earnest I almost agreed with her. "I almost died."

"Are you sure that's what you want to do, Galadriel?" New DM asked. I could sense him circling Holden like a hungry hawk. The behir's turn was next.

The group didn't hide their disapproval. Marty shook his head and tsk tsked. Kieran kept repeating *wow* and Scott, the subtlest of us all said, "You're about to majorly screw the party if you do that. Just so you know...."

"Sorry," she said, and took her place next to Tabitha.

A week later, Little Sister pulled me into a conference room.

"I wanted to tell you that I turned in my resignation," she said. "I got a new job!"

"That's great," I told her. "What are you going to be? A rogue? Or a sorcerer? You'd love being a sorcerer!"

"An associate brand manager," she said. "At a different company."

No! Not another paladin! This couldn't be! We go through more paladins than Spinal Tap does drummers!

"But you just started!" I said. "Was it something we said?"

She shrugged. "It's nothing personal. Just business."

Next time I'm asking for two references.

WANTED: Unruly, unfocused, mead-loving adventuring party seeks dedicated pugilist to complete the party. Innate knowledge of useless movie trivia and bathroom humor appreciated. Rules lawyers need not apply. Position open IMMEDIATELY! Must be willing to sign one-year contract.

About the Author

Shelly Mazzanoble is dealing with some serious abandonment issues, which are conjuring up all sorts of childhood memories. But don't worry—she won't get into them here. You'll have to wait for next month.

No Rest After Gen Con!

BY CHRIS TULACH

illustrations by Eric L. Williams

As I write this, I'm at the big show, Gen Con Indy. Before we begin to talk about what's coming soon, I'd like to briefly mention two big announcements, just in case you haven't seen them yet.

• Dark Sun is the new hotness. Our 2010 campaign setting will be the exciting blasted world of Athas, making its long return from the annuals of the AD&D 2nd Edition days! Expect to see support from Organized Play as we get closer to the setting's release.
• D&D Experience 2010 dates are set. You can enjoy the Super Bowl from home this time. Like last year, D&D Experience will be in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Unlike last year, it's running January 28-31, which is not Super Bowl weekend. We will be adding even more value to the show, endeavoring to make it the must-attend show of the year for D&D players. Nowhere else can you get great access to the D&D R&D staff and get hands-on previews of new products well before they're out in the world. More information to come this fall.

While there's a flurry of activity, excitement, and news at Gen Con Indy, September doesn't disappoint either. Here's what we have on tap for next month.

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PENNY ARCADE EXPO (PAX) 2009

Wizards will be in full force at PAX this year, held at the Washington State Convention Center in downtown Seattle. PAX is a three-day gaming convention right in our backyard, and over the past few years, attendance has exploded. Because it's so close, a lot of Wizards employees will be in our exhibit booth, in our gaming areas, and generally roaming about the convention center taking in the sights and sounds of what is, essentially for us, the finale of our summer convention season here in the U.S.

If you're a D&D player or fan, there will be no shortage of things to do at PAX. Visit our swanky exhibit booth to take in demos and pick up the newest books. Head to our gaming area, located on the 2nd floor of the convention center, and we'll have the Ultimate Dungeon Delve *The Fall of the Tower at Windrock* (bring a team of 6th-level characters and try to make it through six encounters), the "classic" Convention Delve (a one-hour, characters-provided experience), and a host of great Living Forgotten Realms adventures (some from Gen Con Indy, others new at this show). For more information on the show, visit the Penny Arcade Expo site. To register for D&D games, visit the PAX 2009 D&D Gaming Page. Best of all, once you've paid for your registration into the show, all the D&D games are free!

Worldwide D&D Game Day, Part 3

The final book in the triptych of the "twos" releases on September 15, and it's packed with great information on expanding your game. In celebration of *Dungeon Master's Guide 2*, September 19 is the day to come out and participate in another Worldwide D&D Game Day! Bring a buddy and head to your local venue to get involved in a new Game Day experience—creating your own adventures for play.

In the spirit of Dungeon Mastering, we're giving you the opportunity to create and show off your very own adventure. Work as a team to build encounters using the materials provided. After your team has finished, play another team's adventure or DM the one your team created. We provide you with everything you need—maps, miniatures, monster stats, and how-to instructions. Just bring your imagination, a pencil or pen, and some dice!

Just for playing, you'll take home the pregenerated character sheet and a miniature of the character you played. If you DM the game, you'll take home a poster map of the encounter areas and a pack of monster miniatures used in the adventure.

This is a very special activity that has never before been a part of Worldwide D&D Game Day! But don't worry if you just want to play. You can participate in as much or as little of the adventure-building activity as you want. Nothing, however, beats the satisfaction of hearing another team howl in terror as they fight the foes and traps you placed for them. Oh, believe me, I know.

The adventure packet, called *A Passage Into Mystery*, is a special team-created 6th-level adventure that uses tiles from DU3 *Caves of Carnage* and monsters from the new *Monster Manual: Legendary Evils* miniatures expansion. Come out on September 19 and be a part of the adventure! For information on locations near you running this Game Day, head to our Event Locator.

New Living Forgotten Realms Adventures Releasing This Month

Check out the latest adventure offerings from D&D Organized Play!

August 5, 2009

EAST1-5 Mole Hunt

You have been tasked to travel through the Chondalwood in an attempt to retrieve a doppelganger spy working for the dwarves of Eartheart. However, any task involving a doppelganger is sure to have its complications. A Living Forgotten Realms adventure set in the East Rift for characters levels 4–7.

August 12, 2009

BALD1-5 Lost Refuge

An unseen menace lurks in the Cloak Wood. The common folk of the villages and logging camps along the perimeter of the forest have begun to vanish. The forest is filled with beasts, monsters, and vicious fey. If that wasn't enough, the investigation just might end up involving you in an ancient, endless struggle. A Living Forgotten Realms adventure set in Baldur's Gate for characters levels 7–10. This adventure begins the "Fey Gates of the Sea of Swords" major quest.

CORE1-12 Songs of the Heart
A tale of two adventurers leads you to the fabled city of Evereska. Non-natives are not always allowed to enter, so this is a one-time opportunity. It starts with the simple task of locating a missing person but obviously, more is afoot. Can you keep cool and find out what is going wrong before the poet recites his last poem? A Living Forgotten Realms adventure set in the Fallen Lands for characters levels 7–10. Second part of the "Bane of Shadows" trilogy, which began in *CORE1-10 Dancing Shadows*.

CORE1-13 The Fate of Camp 15
Your travels have brought you to the pearl-trading city of Ankhapur, near the Lake of Steam. You have been asked to visit a nearby outpost and pick up a shipment of pearls. It seems like easy money. Unfortunately, something has killed off most of the divers and nearly shut down the operation. Now you must discover the source of this camp's troubles before you share its fate. A Living Forgotten Realms adventure set near the Lake of Steam for characters levels 1–4.

August 19, 2009

CORE1-14 What Storms May Come
Darkness and light struggle and heroes are once again drawn to unravel the secret of the radiant vessel. Can the truth be determined and the machinations of Szass Tam put to an end? This adventure is the conclusion of the "Radiance Against Thay" major quest and sequel to *CORE1-2 Radiant Vessel of Thesk* and *CORE1-6 Incident at the Gorge of Gauros*. A Living Forgotten Realms adventure set in Rashemen and Thay for characters levels 11–14.

MINI1-1 Stirring the Embers
All is not well in the Great Port of Tarmalune, and no one speaks of it. People are disappearing toward some fell purpose, and you are next. A two-round Living Forgotten Realms adventure that is Part 1 of the Embers of Dawn mini-campaign, set in Tarmalune for characters levels 1–4. It is recommended that you play the Embers of Dawn mini-campaign adventures in correct sequence with one character for the best enjoyment and play possibilities within the mini-campaign, but it is not required.

August 26, 2009

IMPI1-5 Demon Hunting
Rumor has it that demon hunting brings rich rewards in the city of Lyrabar. When unforeseen events befall the PCs, will they become hunters - or hunted? A Living Forgotten Realms adventure set in Impiltur for characters levels 4–7.

LURU1-5 Beyond the Wild Frontier
The North is populated with many peoples, amongst them the savage and noble Uthgardt barbarians. The balance of power is fragile in the wilderness. Is it about to change? A Living Forgotten Realms adventure set in Luraur for characters levels 7–10.

About the Author
Originally thought to have been raised from a humble Midwestern family, **Chris Tulach** actually fell to Earth in a meteorite-shaped capsule flung from a planet far outside our galaxy. While under the yellow rays of Sol, Chris's nerdity far surpasses that of any normal human. Using this precious gift only for good, he has become the D&D Organized Play Content Developer, responsible for the development and deployment of Dungeons & Dragons® organized play programs. He is also the co-author of *E2 Kingdom of the Ghouls*.

Hot, Hot Days of Summer

BY BILL SLAVICSEK

We've been having one of the hottest summers on record here in the Great Northwest, but that's nothing compared to the heat we're generating for Dungeons & Dragons. This time out, I'm going to cover a couple of the hottest items currently scorching my desk and inbox. We'll talk about the wicked cool D&D Monster Builder that went live last week. We'll get an advance look at some of the things my team and I will be up to at Gen Con in a couple of weeks. We'll touch upon some upcoming products that you should keep an eye out for. And then I'll wrap it up with a look at The Plane Below: Secrets of the Elemental Chaos. Let's get to it!

Monster Builder Beta

Last week, we quietly let the monster out of the bag ... the D&D Monster Builder, that is. If you haven't tried it yet, what are you waiting for? The D&D Insider Studio has done a great job with this, and making monsters—already a fun activity under 4th Edition—becomes amazingly intuitive and easy with the new D&D Monster Builder. Try it out and let us know what you think during this beta period.

The Plane Below

Our next location-based product, exploring the planes of the D&D multiverse, hits in December when *The Plane Below: Secrets of the Elemental Chaos releases*. This book has a whole lot of excitement packed between the covers, and I couldn't choose one bit to show off, so I asked Kim Mohan (Managing Editor extraordinaire) to pick his favorite bit for me. Here's what he provided. Enjoy!

Upcoming Content

Tomorrow, our new debut content goes live, and you get the finished githzerai player character race to utilize immediately. We listened to what you had to say about the presentation of the psion, and we've made some major adjustments this time. You'll get the githzerai in the more familiar article-style presentation, as well as in the D&D Character Builder, so reading and using the material should be a lot easier.

This month, keep an eye out for *Adventurer's Vault 2*. This is a product that every player needs, because you can never have access to enough cool and powerful items and equipment. Check out the neat group items for something new and different. Also, *Monster Manual: Legendary Evils* huge miniatures boosters hit the shelves this month. In addition to the visible huge figure (including a beholder ultimate tyrant and a balor), each booster contains four random figures drawn from the newest D&D products.

Next month, make sure you get your copy of *Dungeon Master's Guide 2*, and look for a D&D Game Day event in your area. Also in September, the *Revenge of the Giants* super adventure provides a great paragon-tier epic involving giants, elementals, and a waking primordial. For D&D Insiders, next month also sees the premier of the exclusive player character class—the assassin!

GenCon Here We Come!

We'll be flying out to Gen Con in a couple of weeks, and we can't wait to meet up with all of you while we're there. We've got a full slate of seminars on tap, as well as demos, RPGA events, and other surprises and activities throughout the Best Four Days in Gaming. During the show, I'm going to be revealing a number of secrets, which will then appear here as news items for any *D&D* Insiders that aren't at the show. For example, I'm going to reveal that our next campaign setting, following on the heels of *Forgotten Realms* and *Eberron*, is going to be [redacted]. Then, I might just talk about a special *D&D*[redacted]

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[redacted] that Mike Mearls and I are designing for release next year. Should I also talk about [redacted], [redacted], and [redacted] of [redacted]? I guess it depends on what kind of mood I'm in during the seminars. We'll see ...

Primeval Ooze

The viscid and mutable primeval ooze is a primitive form of life, an acid-filled amoeboid blob. Ever hungry, it bubbles with envy of all more advanced creatures.

Primeval Ooze Tactics

The ground surrounding a primeval ooze is covered in a slimy sheen, making enemies more vulnerable to its attacks. Primeval oozes soften up their opponents using *torrent of slime*, then engulf immobilized victims.

Primeval Ooze Lore

Arcana DC 24: Primeval oozes are weapons of the primordials, crafted from the earliest forms of life to consume servants of the gods. Only a few primeval oozes were created. Most that remain dwell in remote regions of the Elemental Chaos, but some lurk in desolate wilds of the world, always on the hunt for prey. Though they are unable to speak, the horrors understand Primordial.

Arcana DC 29: A primeval ooze conceals itself in a slimy place, such as a stinking swamp in Canaughlin Bog, and waits for prey to come unsuspecting to it. When roused, though, it roams the wastelands, devouring everything it encounters—from puny goblins to mighty dragons.

Primeval Ooze **Level 24 Elite Brute**
Huge elemental beast (blind, ooze) XP 12,100

Initiative +17 **Senses** Perception +18; blindsight 20, tremorsense 20
Seeping Sludge aura 3; the aura's area is difficult terrain. Any creature that has a critical hit scored against it while within the aura is knocked prone.
HP 556; **Bloodied** 278
AC 36; **Fortitude** 40, **Reflex** 36, **Will** 37
Immune gaze, poison; **Resist** 30 acid
Saving Throws +2
Speed 5, burrow 5; see also *engulf*
Action Points 1

⊕ **Pseudopod** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Acid**
Reach 3; +27 vs. AC; 3d8 + 9 acid damage, and the ooze slides the target 2 squares.

Engulf (standard; at-will) ✦ **Acid**
The primeval ooze attacks one or two Large or smaller targets; +25 vs. Reflex (no attack roll required against an immobilized creature); the target is grabbed and pulled into the primeval ooze's space. The target is dazed and takes ongoing 20 acid damage until it escapes the grab. A creature that escapes the grab shifts to a square of its choosing adjacent to the primeval ooze. A primeval ooze can move normally while creatures are engulfed within it.

Bursting Cyst (immediate reaction, when damaged by an attack; at-will) ✦ **Acid**
Close blast 4; targets the triggering attacker; +25 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 6 acid damage, and ongoing 10 acid damage (save ends).

A Torrent of Slime (standard; at-will) ✦ **Acid**
Area burst 3 within 20; +25 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 10 acid damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** understands Primordial
Skills Stealth +27
Str 25 (+19) **Dex** 21 (+17) **Wis** 23 (+18)
Con 28 (+21) **Int** 7 (+10) **Cha** 17 (+15)

Encounter Groups

Primeval oozes are usually solitary but can travel in pairs or small groups. Sometimes an ooze learns to share the territory of certain elemental creatures, realizing that leaving this prey alone ultimately brings it more food.

Level 23 Encounter (XP 28,350)
✦ 2 blood fiends (level 23 soldier, MM 12)
✦ 1 great flameskull (level 24 artillery, MM 109)
✦ 1 primeval ooze (level 24 elite brute)

In Case You Don't Know Him

Bill Slavicsek's gaming life was forever changed when he discovered **Dungeons & Dragons** in 1976. He became a gaming professional in 1986 when he was hired by West End Games as an editor. He quickly added developer, designer, and creative manager to his resume, and his work helped shape the *Paranoia*, *Ghostbusters*, *Star Wars*, and *Torg* roleplaying games. He even found some time during that period to do freelance work for **D&D** 1st Edition. In 1993, Bill joined the staff of TSR, Inc. as a designer/editor. He worked on a bunch of 2nd Edition material, including products for **Core D&D**, *Dark Sun*, *Ravenloft*, and *Planescape*. In 1997, he was part of the TSR crowd that moved to Seattle to join Wizards of the Coast, and in that year he was promoted to R&D Director for **D&D**. In that position, Bill oversaw the creation of both the 3rd Edition and 4th Edition of the **D&D Roleplaying Game**. He was one of the driving forces behind the **D&D Insider** project, and he continues to oversee and lead the creative strategy and effort for **Dungeons & Dragons**.

Bill's enormous list of credits includes *Alternity*, *d20 Modern*, *d20 Star Wars*, *Pokemon Jr.*, *Eberron Campaign Setting*, the *D&D For Dummies* books, and his monthly *Ampersand (&)* column for *Dragon* Magazine.